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thesis entitled

THE PIANO IN THE PARLOR AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABSTRACT PAINTING

presented by

Jacqueline C. Shinners

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

MA degree in History of Art

Major professor

Date August 12, 1987

THE PIANO IN THE PARLOR AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ABSTRACT PAINTING

By

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History of Art

1987

ABSTRACT

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In surveying the forces behind painting in the second half of the nineteenth century, one finds little reference to the concept of music and it's relationship to painting. Historians have explored the connection between musical structure and visual symbol and have analyzed paintings through musical titles, but few have dealt with the depiction of a musical instrument, its role within the picture and the symbolic relationship of music to pictorial image.

I have chosen to explore the transformative images of the piano and women and their place within the bourgeois parlor. From realism through symbolism to abstraction, these images have been used to evoke a reverie or a mood akin to the abstract qualities of music in selected works of Hunt, Whistler, Dicksee, Manet, Khnopff, Ensor, Vuillard, Klimt, Klinger and Kupka. A brief history of the piano and the education of women are included.

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Seamus, whose continued love and support has helped to make this all possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all those people whose concern, time and energy are a part of this thesis, my very special thanks. First and foremost is Dr. Eldon Van Liere, my committee chair, who gave generously of his time and his personal library, guided me through the maze and remained a source of inspiration throughout this thesis and my time at MSU.

I also wish to express gratitude to the rest of my committee, Dr. Linda Stanford for her enthusiastic support and encouragement, and Dr. Conrad Donakowski for his willingness to read and offer comments and share his music sources with me.

I am also grateful to the MSU art library staff for their untiring efforts in locating material, and granting me special permission to work with non-circulating books. Finally I would like to acknowledge all my Traverse City and East Lansing friends for their genuine interest in my work, and thank Seamus for being a source of spiritual comfort.

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INTRODUCTION

Central to this thesis is the concept of the home environment, the social influence of music, the role of women and the impact of cultural and intellectual currents on the European bourgeois class as represented in painting in the second half of the nineteenth century. The artistic transformations that occur in this period are essentially that of a shift from a realist vision to the symbolist fascination with suggestion, but this period also witnesses a change in the perception of women and the role of music in paintings.

The association of music and women does not begin in 1850. In fact, the muses of ancient Greece sang at the gods suppers to the accompaniment of Apollo's lyre. It is not the purpose of this thesis to trace the woman's role as music maker in history or the depiction thereof throughout western art. It's ancient roots were evoked in the first half of the, nineteenth century. With Classicism and History Painting at its peak, antique instruments such as the lyre, kithara or aulos were held by those dressed in classical garb placed in an idyllic setting of blue sky and Greek temples or vast columned rooms with arched porticoes. Here,

the instrument, like the manner of dress and architectural structures carried no hierarchic value. They were all the same. Toga, kithara and column were the keys to virtuous classical times. Mythological stories or allegorical parallels with all their accoutrements were the impetuses to painting. Gestural articulation carried the message and the embodiment of noble virtue was the theme. The instrument alone is not the focus, on the contrary, it is hardly noticeable.

Mario Praz defines the two contrasting currents in portrait painting in the eighteenth century as bourgeois realism and heroic idealization and attributes the introduction of classical costume and furnishings to the influential Madame Vigée Le Brun, most respected painter at the court of Marie Antoinette. It is to her that he also attributes the successful launching of what is to become a nineteenth century hallmark; "the lady with the lyre."[1]

In Greek mythology, the lyre and kithara were attributes of Apollo, embodiment of all things ideal and one who moved in perfect harmony with everything that surrounded him. He was the personification of the sun, truth, beauty, morality, justice and goodness. The Greeks bestowed upon him, the ability to raise the destiny of every person through music, art and poetry and to reveal to the people their best qualities so as to create an ideal civilization. He was worshipped in every city as the God of Music and Divine Light and as one who would spread beauty, warmth, the

gift of music, dance and song as well as knowledge over the land. Apollo himself also imparted to the Muses, who were the nine sister goodesses presiding over the activities of the Arts and Sciences, his most perfect rhythm and melodies.[2]

Thus, by simple association the lyre represents all the noble virtues of the God Apollo and any one of the nine sister muses. Therefore, to be portrayed dressed in classical garb holding this sacred instrument was akin to apotheosis itself, and all women of fashion sought to be heroically idealized. One had only to display the slightest musical talent to be cast among the gods.

As time progressed and these portraits multiplied in the nineteenth century, emphasis shifted from an idyllic, calm and serene clear blue sky with imposing mountains peaked by pure and lofty temples to the bourgeois temple, which was the home with its parlor or music salon where the player now wore empire gowns and continued to be associated with the lyre or harp. Still the message was clear, bourgeois woman achieved noble virtue vicariously through this association.

It is at mid-century, that a change in attitude becomes evident in the types of instruments depicted and the settings in which they occur. Due to the rising middle class and the desire to step into modernity, the emphasis shifts from the embodiment of noble virtue through antique representation to the manifestation of everyday life through

realism. Allegorical or mythological ideas of the past are superceded by the present. The importance of daily life takes precedence and the instrument changes from lyre to piano . . . instrument of the century, due to its inherent dynamic qualities and its ability to depict mood. But, the interpretation remains. To be able to play music, essentially of divine origin is to inherit the qualities of the gods. But when artists sought to evoke the higher spheres as is the case at the end of the century with symbolism and the art of evocation and suggestion, the lyre returns as is seen in the works of Puvis de Chavannes and Henri Martin.

Piano manufacture, sheet music production, and the work of composers such as Liszt and Schubert who elevated the level of piano playing to virtuosity, were all contributing factors in bringing the piano into the home. Social and political concepts and home life are now the mainstream of painting. The women who sit at their pianos in these realistically depicted interiors have long since given up their elegantly simple empire gowns for a more inhibiting layered garb of corsets, crenolins and bustles covered by elaborate dresses. These women were wives and mothers and the keepers of spiritual values who could reside only in the home. Thus it was here that young artists first experienced music. The artist's realist eye found the subject irresistible but as his career progressed and he sought other worlds that the piano inspired the instrument itself

became too plebian for inclusion in his painting. The shift in musical mood from realism to symbolism is manifested early through the image of woman at the piano confined within the bourgeois interior. By the turn of the century, the image of woman, has metapmorphosed into a distorted and sinister figure who has returned to holding a lyre, kithara or harp hovering in ambiguous worlds far from the parlor. Crucial to intellectual thinking at this time was the philosophy of music based on Arthur Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Representation, Friedrich Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy and Richard Wagner's synthesis of the two where he elevates Beethoven to a level of redeemer of the world through music. This fascination with music, and the progressive alterations in the artist's thinking about this theme results in the embodiment of music as a non-figurative representation. The "elevation" of the visual image was seen as the ultimate accomplishment in the desire to achieve the visual equivalent of musical abstraction through the pictorial language of color, form and line alone.

In surveying the major painters of the second half of the nineteenth century, I found that paintings with musical instruments fall into two general categories; domestic interiors and the metaphysical. It is not my purpose to catalogue or survey all of these. Instead I have chosen to represent these two categories through the most telling works of William Holman Hunt, James Whistler, Sir Francis Dicksee, Edouard Manet, Fernand Khnopff, James Ensor,

Edouard Vuillard, Gustav Klimt, Max Klinger and Frantisek Kupka.

NOTES--INTRODUCTION

[1] Mario Praz, "The Lady With the Lyre," Neoclassicism, (London: Thames of Hudson, 1968), p.258.

[2] Pares J. Mavroulides, The Ancient Musical Culture, Literature and Drama of the Ancient Greeks (Athens: Sybilla Publication), pp. 11-15 and 23.

CHAPTER I

The Woman's Role and Her Temple

The association of music making by women in the domestic atmosphere arises in seventeenth century England when it was seen to be an accomplishment to bring to a marriage,

> A thing nevertheless frequently used and part of a gentlewomen's bringing up, to sing, to dance and play on the lute or some such instrument. . . . Tis the way their parents think to get them husbands, they are compelled to learn.[1]

One such instrument that young women played was called the virginal, a small keyboard instrument about five feet long, sixteen inches wide, and seven inches high which was usually placed on a specially made flat surface or table (Plate 1). It was so named because young women, or virgins, played it while standing or sitting. The rather sweet, delicate even fragile sound which was created when the keys were depressed, forcing upright jacks with crows quills attached to the ends, to pluck a set of stretched strings from below seemed a most appropriate sound to be produced at the hands of such a performer.

The first music for the virginal printed from engraved plates was in 1611. It was presented to Elizabeth, daughter

Plate 1. Jan Vermeer: A Lady Standing at the Virginals, 1673-75, oil on canvas, 51.7 x 45.2 cm., National Gallery, London.

of James I, on her wedding day (Plate 2). The title page read: "Parthenia or Maydenhead of the first musicke that ever was printed for the Virginalls, Composed by Three Famous Masters. . . . ."[2] A picture of a young girl at the virginal, obviously moved by her playing, sits beneath the lettering and dominates the page. "Parthenia" (Greek for virgin), "Maydenhead," "Virginalls," and picture of a young girl, set the stage for the development over the succeeding three centuries of an inseparable association between women and music, music and virtue, and virtue and domesticity so prevalent in the ninteenth century.

Since the ruling class set the standard by which everyone wanted to be measured, their customs, habits, and style, all were emulated to the degree one's means allowed. Music was one of the customs long associated with the aristocracy. To have music unencumbered by class distinction in the home, in a small way, equalized nobility. With the developing merchant class in England, social distinction was of paramount importance. Pushed to the limits was the term "gentlemen." How was gentility determined? The major requirement was "to live idly without mauall labour, . . ."[3] and in seventeenth century England, this was the overwhelming ambition of every man. The farther one could remove himself from the physical proximity of the workplace, the greater were his chances of mingling with the gentry.

Possessions also helped pave the way to a higher social level. Wealthy tradesmen began to acquire virginals for

Plate 2. Title Page of Parthenia, 1611.

their daughters to play, along with other household furnishings, thus ensuring their place among the gentle folk. By the latter half of the seventeenth century, the virginal was replaced by the harpsicon, a larger wingshaped instrument, although music still continued to be printed for both. The smaller instrument (virginal) then became known as "espinette" (spinet) due to Charles II's ingratiating attitude toward anything French, while the larger version changed to clavichord. The term "virginal," however, lasted until 1700 when all instruments of this genus came to be called harpsichord, regardless of size or shape.[4] No matter how they might vary, distinctness and separateness of tone were inherent in the nature of these instruments resulting in a sharp, bright timbre.

A need for an instrument to be expressive without the aid of a violin, brought about the development of the pianoforte, just a short step away from the harpsichord, but monumental in its element of expression. Only slight adaptation of existing skill was required to enable one to play it and its expense served to cause its social desirability. The major technical difference between harpsichord and pianoforte was with the replacement of the plucking quill for a hammer and the ability for the depression of the key to result in a hammer blow to be given a string and once struck rebound fully, producing a swelling sound that would close only upon release of the key. Dull in sound compared to quilled harpsichord jacks, it was,

nevertheless, more desirable due to its shading possibilities. A newspaper advertisement of this new instrument praised its qualities and read:

> A harpsichord of a new invention called pianoforte, having a round, pithy harmony, imitating the harp or lute in the bass, the flute in the treble as well as the quality of bells. . . . When the full sound is let out, it is louder and more pleasing than an ordinary hapsichord. All changes are made instantly, without being observed, upon a single keyboard. . . . This instrument is very easy to play and to maintain. There are no quills as in other harpsichords.[5]

Significant improvement upon the pianoforte came with the addition of sustaining loud and soft pedals and a new type of action that made possible a more powerful stoke upon the strings, though it cost a certain loss of speed. By 1800 the pianoforte had reached a six octave range and a separate bridge for the bass allowed for shorter, stouter strings to be struck at the most acoustically optimum place, thus producing a stronger, fuller sound.

The pianoforte made its debut in London concert circles around 1760, but it wasn't until the 1790's that it was featured as a solo instrument. Concerts were on the rise, as well as piano manufacture, instrument refinement, and sheet music publication. Snob appeal associated with concert going increased the demand for pianofortes and resulted in the concept of "pianoforte as furniture." Encased in elaborately decorated cabinets and concealed within lavish tables, the pianoforte served as a piece of furniture cum musical entity, for the very rich, but this exclusivity did not last long. Essentially, functional furniture is difficult to

play, but what this points out is the enormous importance placed on music and having a keyboard instrument in the home. The piano in the home, was a measure of one's cultural attainments and integral part of society life. The woman's role in this was verified in nineteenth century literature as well as painting. This will be the focus of this thesis but it is of value to note the changes that occur to these instruments in the nineteenth century before this developed.

With the increased popularity of piano concerts, larger audiences required larger rooms and desired more sound projection. The search for a greater range of expression found its solution in heavier hammers, hitting thicker and tighter strings. Increased tension and weight needed extra support, and to carry this additional weight iron plates were introduced. "The strong metal plates . . . gives a heaviness to the touch, but a fullness and vocal resonance to the tone" was the comment of a composer who played on the new piano for the first time in 1822.

Three major innovations in piano development took place in the 1820's. Metal bracing to accommodate heavier hammers and thicker strings; double escapement action, a complex device which allowed the hammer to rebound from the string and rest at an intermediate point as long as the finger held the key down, facilitating quick successive notes; and covering the hammer heads with felt, replacing the tanned deer hide which eventually dried resulting in a brittle sound. These refinements produced a piano that could be

played louder and faster with more sensitive shadings, thus creating a deeper, richer textual quality which served the romantic composer-performer's desire for an instrument that could evoke the widest range of emotional responses. The piano became a symbol of the future, a "symbol of liberty, man's freedom of thought and enterprise."[6] To use one to its capacity was to be admired and elevated to the level of hero, thus the introduction of the virtuoso in the 1830's and 1840's.

By this time, Paris had become the dominant cultural center of Europe, drawing to it the talented from all over who were guaranteed receptive audiences. From about 1835-48, the Hungarian Franz Liszt pushed the limits of piano playing to a level of virtuosity never before achieved. In doing so, he was not only heroicized, but so was the piano, thus placing still more social value on the piano itself.

During the 1850's and 1860's, after the rise of the virtuoso, who always played his own compositions, performers began to interpret the music of other composer-performers. Clara Wiech, an exceptionally gifted musician and composer, was the first to present a Beethoven interpretation in a public performance. A woman performing in public was actually more the exception than the rule. Tradition dictated that the respectable woman's place was in the home and musical home entertainment was part and parcel of this female domain. Manufacturers were quick to find the means to satisfy more middle class desires, and upright pianos were

designed to fit into smaller, narrower apartments. By 1830, pianos were manufactured and marketed just like any other business. Social conditions, interpreted by artists, were manifested through the changing image of woman, which could be seen as a hallmark of the nineteenth century.

If woman was relegated to the home, except in rare cases, it was the doing of a male dominated society. Many works by male painters and authors served to define and reaffirm the role of woman in European culture in the second half of the nineteenth century. The didactic limits with their restrictive moralizing tone placed on the female in her progress from childhood to adolescence and finally womanhood created this middle class woman. Education for females was slow to take root in England, and not until 1870 were girls from the upper and middle classes able to receive education in a state elementary school system. Until that time, they were educated at home by their mothers and mostly in the art of caring and nurturing. Private boarding schools for the very rich, however, provided an education for adolescent girls. The primary purpose for their education was summed up in the words of Jean Jacques Rousseau which also provided the impetus for their curriculum.

> A woman's education must therefore be planned in relation to a man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all times and this is what should be taught when she is young.[7]

An adolescent girl saw her future as an "ornament, household manager and mother in her husband's domestic circle."[8] Her studies at school reflected this mentality. First and foremost came the study of music. Piano playing, singing, and harp lessons were taught two to three times a week, and required daily supervised practice. After music came dancing; deportment; drawing; modern languages; French, Italian, and German; English; arithmetic and finally, religion, all taught only once a week.

The point of feminine gentility was to become more marriageable. Having achieved marital status, a woman's duties and responsibilities were not easy. Within the confines of the home, her burden weighed heavily for she was not just the keeper of the home and family, but the basis for societal judgement. As Isabella Beeton said of women's role in 1880:

> Her spirit will be seen through the whole establishment. She ought to remember that she is the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega in the government of her establishment; and that it is by her conduct that its whole internal policy is regulated. She is, therefore, a person of far more importance in a community than she usually thinks she is. On her pattern her daughters model themselves; by her counsels they are directed; through her virtues all are honored; "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."[9]

Nineteenth century cultural ideology clearly separated men's and women's daily lives. The doctrine of the "Separate Spheres" claimed that the personal sphere was to be maintained by the woman. She was relegated to the keeper of the spiritual and emotional aspects of her home and family.

The man, on the other hand, was an integral part of the business community which existed outside the home, and this was known as the public sphere. To balance out this sometimes harsh and intense business world, the woman was to provide a peaceful, warm, secure, and stable environment to which the man could return and seek refuge.

In the "Cult of True Womanhood," a term used so frequently in the nineteenth century that its meaning was known amongst all, women existed within clearly defined parameters.

> These attributes . . . by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtures--piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife--woman.[11]

Capturing the ideal woman as not only domestic, but submissive, pious, and pure were literary figures, such as Tennyson and Patmore. In 1849 Lord Alfred Tennyson's popular Idylls of the King polarized the internal female domain and external male realm in very precise terms in "The Princess":

> Man for the field woman for the hearth;
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey;
> All else confusion.[11]

Confusion only if the woman did not play her part. A rising middle class proved that the economic ordering of society was based on a man's ability to achieve wealth. His actions, regardless of integrity, were condoned without judgment. The woman's role, however, was so assiduously defined and

redefined in literature, poetry, and painting that her actions were judged in terms of angelic idealization.

> . . . And still with favor singled out,
> Marr'd less than man by mortal fall,
> Her disposition is devout,
> Her countenance angelical;
> The best things that the best believe
> Are in her face so kindly writ
> The faithless, seeing her conceive,
> Not only heaven, but hope of it; . . .[12]

clearly epitomizes woman as the essence of purity and holiness. Coventry Patmore's very popular poem, "The Angel in the House," 1849, emphasizes woman's angelic qualities and casts her as a selfless, dependent woman who pleased and fascinated her husband as well as lavished him with total devotion. It is only through a man's recognition that she achieves the freedom to live.

> The maiden so, from love's free sky
> In chaste and prudent counsels caged,
> But longing to be loosin'd by
> Her suitor's faith declared and gauged . . .
> His clear repute with great and small;
> The jealousy his choice will stir;
> But, ten times more than ten times all,
> She loves him for his love of her.

Through his love, security and reason for being are realized, and she expresses her gratitude through total devotion and submissiveness:

> . . . And oft she views what he admires
> Within her glass, and sight of this
> Makes all the sum of her desires
> To be devotion unto his.
>
> . . . And prizing what she can't prevent,
> (Right wisdom, often misdeemed whim,)
> Her will's indomitably bent
> On mere submissiveness to him.[13]

Literature, poetry, family, man, social conditions and even painting demanded that women be nothing less than the great spiritual mother of God, virgin pure, holier than mortals resting within her enclosed garden of domesticity. She was the perfect Madonna perched upon her pedestal, surrounded by her attributes and idolized for her virtues. Bram Dijkstra refers to this phenomenon as the "Cult of the Household Nun," an interpretation of French historian Jules Michelet's phrase, "She is an altar . . . which places her higher than man and makes her a religion."[14] Revered, held captive in "her place," purity implied, she is the fantastic vision of the male ego.

While there are earlier depictions of this apparition of womanhood, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of 1848 which was profoundly inspired by John Ruskin's Modern Painters, and his dictum, "Go to nature in all singleness of heart, selecting nothing, rejecting nothing,"[15] produced intense beautiful images of her. The three major figures in this group, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1888), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), and John Everett Millais (1829-1896) developed a style that drew from Italian primitives and adopted the concept of decoration, intensity of color, definitive contour, and spiritual magnitude characteristic of the artists before the venerable Raphael. "To have genuine ideas to express" was a basic tenet of their society. From Rossetti's intense involvement with Dante's poetry and the group's fascination for Elizabeth Siddall who

served often as a model, the Pre-Raphaelite prototype emerges.[16] Waves of flowing hair accentuate transparent eyes that gaze within and touch the spiritual realm. Finely sculpted cheekbones descend to a strong square jaw that holds full sensuous lips. The conjunction of medieval chivalry and womanhood had far reaching ramifications. Touched by the mysticism of the medieval world, images of woman gaze upward to heaven or downward in shame. Clothed in medieval dress or nun's habits, the angelic woman is symbolically enclosed within a garden of lilies pure or cast within a shallow, confined space. Cloaked behind the guise of medieval symbolism, the ideal nineteenth century woman emerges reflecting a morally confined psychological state of mind.[17]

A guide to submissiveness and domesticity put forth in Sara Stickney Ellis' book, The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits (1839) outlined proper behavior for middle class women and was immediately popular both in England and the United States. Recognizing the value of money as a stepping stone to aristocratic dignity, she encouraged women to understand the harsh pitfalls and sometimes unconscionable transactions that necessarily take place in the male public sphere. Rather than change her husband's business world, she should muster her strength to be "a kind of second conscience, for mental reference, and spiritual counsel in moments of trial" as well as "keep a

separate soul for his family, his social duty and his God."[18]

Respectable Victorian men measured success and determined their degree of social status and value through women. Now that she was cast as a paragon of virtue within the domestic temple, how could she prove her purity, piety, submissiveness, and domesticity? One avenue was through her accomplishments. Distantly related to the fine arts and so well drilled into her while at boarding school, they also expressed the sum total of her education. The more "accomplished" a woman, the more virtuous and pure she was considered. Ranking as one of the most important accomplishments was music which mainly involved piano playing, singing, and sometimes harp playing.

As we have seen, a piano in the home and a woman to play it was the cornerstone out of which a middle class family carved its social and spiritual standards. Franz Liszt through his transcriptions of major orchestral works was probably the single most important figure to make a wide variety of music available to a general public through the piano. His music consisted of transcriptions of fantasies, Schubert's songs, and Berlioz's and Beethoven's symphonies. Composers of the Romantic generation, such as Liszt, created in common basic vocabularies of harmonic progression, rhythm and form and a shared intention to communicate meaning exclusively through the musical idiom.[19]

Walter Pater described Romanticism in music as "the addition of strangeness to beauty." Strangeness then becomes the point of departure for understanding musical romanticism. Its concept is rooted in remoteness and undefined by boundaries. Its purpose is to transcend the present and passionately search for the unattainable. A haunting presence, intentionally obscured, can only allude to form.

There are, however, conflicting tendencies; a major one is the relationship of instrumental music to the spoken word. The great instrumental composers, such as Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn, were considered classical for their works were based on pure form, while Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, who come later combined both word and tone. Partial resolution came with the onset of program music that revealed a poem, story or description through instrumental music alone.

However, the denial of the word was not the only answer, for instrumental accompaniment to vocal music that ranged from Schubert's lieder to Wagner's musical dramas also resolved this apparent conflict. It is this second resolve that contributed to the informal musical evenings so prevalent in the nineteenth century family circle.

Music, as well as science, searches to express thoughts close to nature and something beyond the physical. The alienation of the artist from society, stemmed in part from the rapid expansion of status, general population explosion,

and the creation of a new society: essentially, a new class of people to please. Modern life seemed far from nature and the further away from daily life it became, the more it was idealized. A kinship and spirituality existed between the inner life of the artist and the natural world. Essentially, longing to be spiritual in that it touches the soul of mankind, musical forms begin to expand to reflect these new thoughts. Musical expression becomes more flexible than the eighteenth century classical structure and long, lyrical melodies dominate. Harmonic technique and instrumental color become the principle vehicle in expressing remoteness, yearning, and inexpressible, but strongly felt, emotions. Chromaticism, modulation, suspension of harmonies, long repetitive rhythmic patterns, tonal ambiguities and absence of distinct cadences, all work to blur the outline of totality.[20]

Piano music entitled "fantasy", "nocturne", "rhapsody", and "impromptu" contributed to the Romantic suggestion of mood. Schubert's keyboard works with their lyrical melodies and harmonies, distinctive in mood became the basis for subsequent intimate piano pieces which would find a comfortable place with in the home.

NOTES--CHAPTER I

[1] Arthur Loesser, Men, Women, and Pianos: a Social History (New York: Simon and Schuester, 1954), p. 190.

[2] Donald J. Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980), p. 285.

[3] Loesser, p. 187.

[4] Ibid., p. 197.

[5] Ibid., p. 315.

[6] Ibid., p. 348.

[7] Erna Olafson Hellerstein, Leslie Parker Hume, and Karen M. Offen, Victorian Women (Standford: Stanford University Press, 1981), p. 16.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Barbara Welters, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (March 1966): 152.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Lord Tennyson, The Literiture of England, Third single volume ed. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Forseman and Co., 1979), p.892.

[12] Coventry Patmore. Poems 4th ed. (London, 1890), pp.88-91.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Bram Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.13.

[15] Jeremy Maas, Victorian Painters (London: Barrie and Rockiliff, The Cresset Press, 1969), p. 124.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Jane Burden, later wife of William Morris, who Rossetti paints in 1858 as Queen Guinevere, is the model from which the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood develops its type of woman, known as the "Stunner."

[18] As cited in Dijkstra, p.11.

[19] Grout, p.550.

[20] Grout, p.559.

CHAPTER II

England

"Revelation and Evocation"

An arbitrary chord struck--she jumps up, startled by the deep, melancholic resonance in the bass. It continues to vibrate as long as his hand remains on the piano keys, taking her back to a far away, but not forgotten place. Rhythmic in her pause, she is caught for a fleeting moment in the revelation that she can choose, rather than accept, what's put before her; control, rather than be controlled, and leave the path of darkness to cross the threshold toward redemption. She has only to decide.

In William Holman Hunt's The Awakening Consience, 1851-1853 (Plate 3), the fallen woman, understood by every nineteenth century person, is not an uncommon theme. One of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution was the poor standard of living resulting from low wages. By 1850, single working women could barely support themselves on their earnings and were forced to take up other work. Some turned to sewing and teaching, while others followed the path of prostitution. These unfortunate women eventually became recognized as products of social and economic conditions, and aroused public sympathy. Their plight was depicted in

Plate 3. **William Holman Hunt: The Awakening Conscience, 1854, oil on canvas, 74.3 x 54.9 cm., Tate Gallery, London.**

painting, as well as literiture, and they were viewed as powerful symbols of innocent suffering.[1]

While other Victorian painters depicted the outcast woman having no where to turn, as a weeping, huddled figure weighted down by both a mass of costume as well as conscience, Hunt chose to focus on another aspect of the fallen woman: the kept woman. He shows her figurative and literal rise to consciousness through music. This rising woman motif has been traced back to an engraving after Charles LeBrun's most famous Repentant Magdalene Renouncing All the Vanities of the World (1956-57) (Plate 4).[2] Hunt deals with the process of her struggle through elaborate iconographic symbolism combined with realist aesthetics which also serve as modern vanities. Of paramount importance in his presentation is the influence of the Flemish masters, whose major works he encountered in 1849 on a trip to the continent.[3] But it was not until his profound commitment to Christianity in 1851 that he adopted prefigured symbolism as a medium of communication.

Inspired also in part by William Hogarth (1697-1764), Hunt employs the Hogarthian tradition of depicting a moral message in narrative form complete with labels, documents, and inscriptions, in an effort to speak to nineteenth century social conditions. The forum for this essentially Victorian subject is the domestic interior, couched in the language of visual realism and symbolic content. Hunt's overwhelming desire to speak to contemporary society moved

Plate 4. Charles Le Brun: The Repentant Magdalene, 1656-57.

him to search for a symbolic language that could replace the then current medievalism.

Hunt's stated propose was his desire "to show how the still small voice speaks to the human soul in the turmoil of life."[4] The key to a fuller understanding of Hunt's intentions lies in recognizing the powerful role that music plays. He utiliizes the elemental sound emanating from the piano as a vehicle for connecting two worlds, the safe, secure virtuous past of her childhood, and the discordant, unhappy circumstances of her present situation. A musical phrase touches her soul, stirs her inner emotions, and causes her to reflect upon happier days. Yet, while on her seducer's lap, she, too, contributes to the musical harmony until this chance strain touches her in a most powerful way, jarring her emotions causing her to leap forward--breaking the harmony. It is through music that she reaches a higher level of consciousness and instantly realizes her dilemma: to remain a kept woman or repent. Music then becomes the key to reaching the spiritual inner realm of salvation. For a Victorian woman, this may not have been so easy to decide. Where would she go? What would she do with her life? Hunt's realist eye and attention to detail tells us that her wealthy lover has just arrived, for he is still wearing his left glove, while the right glove, lying on the floor, symbolizes her status as a fallen woman. Ruskin's reference to the "fatal newness" of the furnishings provides social commentary on the situation. A recently decorated place in

which a married man would rendezvous with his lover could hold no spiritual value. A brand new piano, the parlor's carpet with no memory of family gatherings, stiff, leather bound books not yet softened from use, and a picture of Rembrandt's Woman Taken in Adultery hanging over the piano, echo her life as a kept mistress. Surrounding the frame are carved marigolds and bells, symbols of sorrow and warning. To ensure the seriousness of the subject, appearing underneath the picture, lettered on the frame are the words, "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart."

Within the entire typological scheme, the woman's somewhat starry eyed gaze through the open window is problematic. Every aspect of the scene is waiting for her to decide between salvation and condemnation. The vibrating tone, controlled by her shallow lover that keeps her in touch with her past as well as under his spell; the fleeting moment reinforced by the clock on the piano; the mirror reflecting the budding spring, itself temporal; and the nasty cat, toying with a wounded sparrow all serve to intensify her situation. Her appearance is that of a momentary haunted dream, rather than resolve. In 1856-57 upon the owner's request, Hunt altered the expression on the woman's face from anguished pain to the startled look we see today, thus making it difficult to feel the full impact of such a momentous decision.[5] It was, however, a decision never to be made. While this painting had a public moral

message, it was as well a not so disguised autobiographical confession for Annie Miller, the woman in the painting, was one of Hunt's lovers. Initially a prostitute, she remained one, as well as being kept by Hunt, who provided her with a house, education, and money.[6]

What Hunt does here in the 1850's is seen more cearly if it is set against a late eighteenth century painting. Marguerite Gérard used similar symbols to idealize domestic life. To the right of L'Heureux Menage, ca. 1795 (Plate 5), stands a spinet with the artist's signature in place of the instrument maker's symbolizing her key role as creator of this domestic interior. Centralized and enthroned, a woman sits holding a scroll of music, making reference to the harmony existing within the family. Here Gérard uses music to enhance the central theme of connubial bliss. The virtuous mother who provides for the spiritual and emotional well being of her family does so through music. Hunt's use of music, on the other hand, emphasizes the dissonance or broken harmony created by a man who leaves his family to entertain a mistress. "Oft in the Stilly Night" sits on the piano while Edgar Lear's, version of Tennyson's "Tears Idle Tears" lies, cast off on the floor, still partially encased in its wrapping, expressing "the yearning that young people occasionally experience for that which seems to have passed away forever."[7] Expressed symbolically in every detail of this Victorian cluttered interior, as well as in the intensity and luminosity of his colors, Hunt reveals her

Plate 5. Marguerite Gérard: L'Heureux Menage, 1785-1800.

painful awareness. She playing her part, he playing his, together they composed a harmony that struck a chord in her heart and caused her emotional flight. A lost soul, searching in the purity of nature, (seen by the viewer only in a mirror image,) for salvation. A reflection of what she wishes herself to be--pure. Yet, as the mirror reveals in the maze of spring freshnes, it is endless and ambiguous with no clear path to follow.

Her awareness is depicted, but there is no suggestion that there is any way for her to achieve Gérard's interior harmony with a faithful dog attached to his master, in this case, the woman's faithful husband and a cat sprawling playfully in a submissive position on a cushion next to the woman's chair. Unlike Hunt's cat which symbolizes infidelity, this feline refers to woman's sensuality. The cooing love birds reflect the love between this couple while the child, the result of their blissful union, points to the mother, spiritual keeper of the home. Hunt's broken winged bird lies on the floor and offers a parallel to the fallen woman, herself unable to fly she remains under the spell of the cat who will play with her at will. Hunt also tells us that "The corn and vine (of the wallpaper) are left unguarded by the slumbering cupid watchers (on the piano) and the fruit is left to be preyed upon by thievish birds."[8]

Devoid of interior detail, Gérard's view is not a realist's version of domestic bliss, but a romantic and idealized concept of interior harmony. In both cases, music

becomes the symbolic means to expressing an interior mood. Hunt's narrative, as it is read, evokes a feeling of doom reflected in the stirring low note in the bass, while Gérard conveys spiritual harmony.

James Whistler who was a contemporary of Hunts presents still another view of realism in his At the Piano of 1858-59 (Plate 6). This is the first of his musical paintings to prefigure his affinity for abstract musical concepts prevalent in the work that he would develop in the 1870's. While on friendly terms with Hunt, Whistler, in reference to this painting, sounds the death knell for Hunt's Victorian realism which is so dependent on a moralizing tone and also criticizes him for "purposefully copying without thought, each blade of grass."[9] Whistler more fully reflected his feelings when he said,

> Art should be independent of all clap-trap should stand alone and appeal to the artistic sense of eye and ear, without confounding with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism and the like. All these had no kind of concern with it, and that is why I insist on calling my works "arrangements" and "harmonies."[10]

It would be some time, however, before Whistler would synthesize Theophile Gautier's dictum of "Art for Art's Sake" and develop his work in accordance with this principle. But it had its beginnings in his first major painting.

Whistler's At the Piano is the total antithesis of the Awakening Conscience for it evokes a quiet mood, revealing a sense of privacy reserved for the inner realm, and allowing

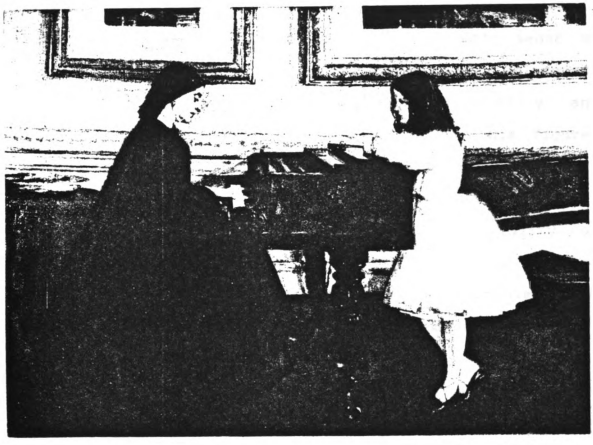

Plate 6. James McNeill Whistler: Au Piano, 1858-59, oil on canvas, 66 x 90 cm., Taft Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio.

for a feeling of mystery to rise from the silhouetted figure delicately fingering the keyboard. It, too, is realism, but it is different from Hunt's, for there is no detailed collection of symbols. It was Whistler's exposure in France before he settled in England, where he came under the influence of Courbet's realism, which emphasized ordinary ways of ordinary people that led him to what was seen in England as a radical point of view. Courbet's sense of representing the commonplace, combined with Velazquez' emphasis on painterly values, subdued tonality and psychological expression led Whistler to set his figures against a neutral background and unify a painting through a subtle gradation of tones. This produced a purely Whistlerian style marked by an ethereal quality of atmosphere and quiet mood. He treats color as a composer treats sound and reflects the arrangement of harmonies which please the eye just as a composer arranges melodies to please the ear.[11]

He also shared an affinity with seventeenth century Dutch painting, as well as with Spanish painting. Vermeer was the master who dealt with real and imaginary space. Whistler also captured the essence of spiritual light so common in Vermeer's interiors. Similar in layout, The Concert (Plate 7) which was in London's National Gallery in 1859, may have provided the structure for At the Piano.[12] Like Vermeer too one finds pouring into the picture light from an indiscernible source. It reflects off the glass of

Plate 7. **Jan Vermeer: The Concert, 1662, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 64.7 cm., Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.**

the framed pictures on the wall, and cascades down Annie Haden's white dress as she stands quietly transfixed, meditating on the sounds mingling in the stillness and casts a somewhat haunting glow over the shallow interior space. The cello case beneath the grand piano looms large as this darkened form echoes the gentle curve of the piano. Deep, rich mauve carpeting set against a soft green wall rising up behind the piano bearing two gold framed paintings which Whistler cuts off by his own frame, all combine to emphasize the horizontal element. The suggestion of the extension of the piano and one of the pictures beyond the painting's right hand limit hints at an openness and psychological presence beyond what one sees.

Who is she? What is she saying? On one level Whistler represents a domestic scene which is part of his everyday life. Accomplished pianist, Deborah Haden, Whistler's half sister and her daughter Annie, gather in the music room of their London townhouse, the setting of so many musical evenings. On another level, his style of painting suggests a vaguely melancholic mood; a reverie, with each in her private world and yet on a third level, he suggests a spirituality that reveals itself when the soul is touched and emotions stirred by the powerful arrangement of harmonies.

Although his colleague, Fantin Latour, may have arrived at presenting two women in an intimate domestic setting first[13], (Plate 8) with Two Sisters, 1859, Whistler's

Plate 8. Fantin Latour: Two Sisters, 1859, oil on canvas, 98 x 130 cm., The St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri.

version, with his strong horizontal format, contrasting forms and subtle gradation of color presents a stronger, more evocative composition. He creates a contemplative mood with soulful faces lost in reverie where visual suggestion of sound becomes the musical conversation, where the real duet is between the listener and the player.

"As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound and color."[14] Whistler continues his development of musical themes in Harmony in Green and Rose: The Music Room of 1860 (Plate 9) first titled simply The Music Room, but subsequently elaborated by the addition of "Harmony" are all signs of Whistler's growing concern for a modern suggestive music-like painting. To do so, he begins to move away from exact representation toward a musical quality or the evocation of mood which makes the piano once essential, no longer necessary. "With music, the listener responds to the relationship of sounds which except in occasional instances have no representational content."[15] Devoid of musical instruments, Whistler creates a musical tension analogous to the formal tension of the verticals, horizontals and the strong diagonal mantelpiece that quickly draw the eye into the picture to rest on Annie Haden in her white dress, illuminated by a source outside the window.

When Whistler saw this painting again in 1892 at the Goupil Gallery, he commented in a letter to his wife, "quite primitive--but such sunshine! None of the Dutchmen to

Plate 9. **James McNeill Whistler: The Music Room, 1860, oil on canvas, 95.5 x 70.8 cm., Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.**

compare with it and such colour!"[16] Subtle yellows, creams and greens lend harmony and unity. Balance is achieved through Annie's white dress against Miss Boott's black riding habit. She, like Annie Miller in the Awakening Conscience, also captures the fleeting moment in her step toward something beyond the picture frame. Interesting is the profusion of cream, rose, and green flowered chintz curtains that enhance the verticality and frame Deborah Haden's reflection in the mirror, revealing the only view of her. Each in her own space within the very shallow picture, they are worlds apart. Here, the mirror lends a note of spirituality and replaces the piano in its suggestion of temporality. Dating back to the seventeenth century Dutch interiors, a mirror as well as a musical instrument, reflected the meditation on the soul's ultimate destination. This had two effects: one could renounce material things for spiritual things, or indulge in sensual pleasures and transient joys, for it is not the duration that matters, but the intensity with which one experiences these joys.[17] The interior itself merges real and illusory space and reflects the metaphysical concept of the picture: visual harmony equivalent to musical harmony, both capable of depicting an atmosphere that transcends time. This leads one to doubt one's own perceptions and question the boundaries between real and imagined existence. Mirrors only add credence to the temporality of human existence. The Music Room mirror reflects the passage of time while the mirror in the

Awakening Conscience reflects the purity of nature and the soul's desire for this purity. In Whistler's developing Symbolist aesthetics, mirror symbolism plays an important part in his 1864 version of Symphony in White No. 2: The Little White Girl. Simplified forms mingle in the balance between real and imagined space and the concept is even more evocative of an interior self-searching spiritual mood. Whistler's work was later to influence the Belgian Fernand Khnopff in his purifying form, painterly tonality, and symbolism.

By 1867, in a letter to Fantin Latour, Whistler condemned Courbet's brand of realism and lamented his not having studied with Ingres. Throughout the 1860's, he made a conscious effort to change his style. His fascination with Oriental art manifested itself first through simplicity of form, flat areas of color and overall decorative patterning. Aware of the correspondences between music and art, Whistler sought an art as pure as that of music. Endeavoring to capture the fluidity of movement so characteristic of Japanese porcelain, he stretched the limits of his medium by creating a "sauce": pigment thinned with turpentine and linseed oil to an almost pouring consistency. This allowed for color variations to be quickly worked up depending on the amount of pigment used. Sky and water could be laid in with great sweeping brush strokes on a blue ground for a night scene, and a grey ground for a misty scene. In Nocturne Blue and Green: Chelsea, 1871 (Plate 10), Whistler

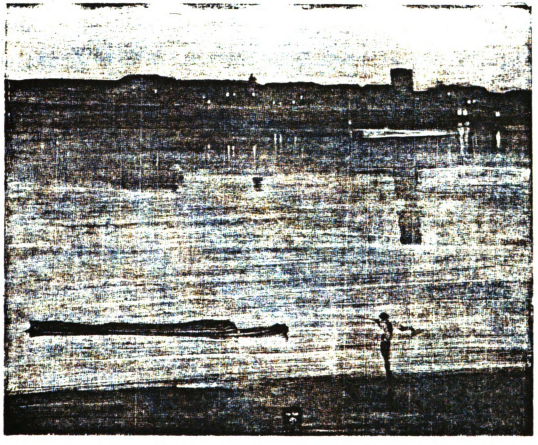

Plate 10. James McNeill Whistler: Nocturne in Blue and Green Chelsea, 1871, oil on canvas, 48.2 x 39.8 cm., Tate Gallery, London.

first set out to capture a feeling. Attracted to dusk, for its expressive qualities of suggestion, where forms are reduced to vague silhouettes, he was able to achieve atmosphere and mystery and create a veil between the visible world and that which lies beyond. "And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil. . ."[18]were the words Whistler chose to describe his affinity for the atmosphere which launched the conscious mind into speculation of love and life, death and dreams where reality and illusion become one and time is suspended somewhere between the edge of night and the breah of day. Strong horizontal sweeps of muted color define the poetic stillness and the quiet rhythm suggests the essence of form. Orginally called moonlights, his musician friend, Frederick Leyland, suggested Nocturne and Whistler said, "it . . . does so poetically say all I want to say and no more than I wish."[19]

The nocturne was a title originally given to a musical composition devised by the romantics for a night piece which evolved early in the nineteenth century. Although principally associated with Frederick Chopin, the first composer to use the title was John Field (1782-1857), an Irish pianist. This new piano music was mainly comprised of short single pieces with graceful melodies in the high registers and sustained arpeggiations in the low registers. Chopin adapted the single line ornamentation and developed the nocturne to include repetitive phrases almost lost to extreme embellishment. Typically, a long, drawn out melody

flows over a sustaining tremolo in the bass. A more expressive mood is achieved through contrasting tempo and key. Tending toward the introspective, Chopin's work is stylistically diverse, yet dramatic and moving.[20]

Walter Pater said that "all art approaches the condition of music," in its suggestion of feeling, creation of mood, and tonal harmony. Whistler's work also approaches the condition of music. By this time, he is painting "symphonies", "nocturnes" and "harmonies" reflecting the abstract qualities of music with only color and the suggestion of form.

> Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music. But the artist is born to pick and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful--as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he brings forth from chaos glorious harmony.[21]

Whistler's Nocturnes, as the titles suggest are night pieces where specificity is lost and instead a visual poetical timelessness of space and color is portrayed. "To designate a thing directly is to suppress three-quarters of the poem's value which consists in gradually gaining an imitation of the depths."[22] This quoation from the French Symbolist poet, Mallarmé is appropriate here for Whistler had met him in 1867 and kept in contact with him for many years, even executing the poet's portrait in a lithograph in 1894. The writer and painter obviously shared a deep and abiding concern for the suggestive power of the work of art. Whistler, for his part, portrayed in visual terms the

poetical timelessness of space and color. Broad, sweeping tonalities of unified color create the illusion of an atmosphere where silence reigns. Curiously, if music were the purest of artistic forms which artist's of Whistler's generation and subsequent ones sought to emulate, it led them to a still more inexplicable ideal which was the absence of the depiction of not only musical instruments, and the suggestion of music, but of all sound--silence.

Whistler's progression from the depiction of the piano to nocturnes that sought to evoke musical harmonies is unique. Few artists in England at the end of the nineteenth century could eliminate the narrative element in painting even in their search for the spiritual and the evocative. Sir Frank Dicksee is one such artist and his painting A Reverie 1895 (Plate 11) serves to illustrate the tenacity of literalness and the desire to use music as an evocative element. Musical chords, delicate lilting harmonies and a sweet, gentle voice combine to produce a melody capable of stirring an emotional state once laid to rest. An anguished look searching for peace finds pause in a momentary vision of the past. Chastised for its sentimentality, Frank Dicksee's A Reverie provides an unusual description of the power of music. What is Dicksee offering in this vignette? An intense glow radiating from a silken lampshade illuminates a frail woman as she sits at the piano fulfilling her after-dinner domestic responsibility--that of providing an intimate musical evening. With his elbow

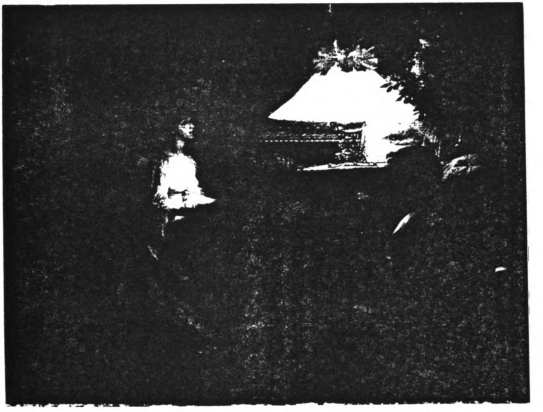

Plate 11. Sir Frank Dicksee: A Reverie, 1895, oil on canvas, 102.9 c 137 cm., Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

resting on the arm of an easy chair and his hand supporting his head, a man sits shielding himself not only from the intensity of the light, but also from the woman playing the piano. Instead of summoning spiritual togetherness, her choice of music has unwittingly served to separate her from her husband and immerses each one into a private world of reverie. Music appears as a powerful testimony to touching the soul and stirring emotions; so powerful that an apparition, wispy and vague with long flowing hair hovers between the tangible and the invisible at the far left and clearly is the man's private vision for the piano player remains unaware.

Who is this vision? The accompanying words "In the years fled/ Lips that are dead/ Sang me that song," might suggest a lost love or a former wife dead, but ever present. Old music, left on the piano, now played with new life, but to no avail. A man stares, longing and searching for the happiness of a time gone by. Critics of the time were quick to complete the story. D. H. Dixon suggested that the "music of a 'calm and complacent' wife conjured up to her husband a vision of a beautiful woman who passed out of his life before it became a commonplace, conventional thing it now is."[23]

The melodrama of the moment captured in the delicate rendering of form now in light, now in shadow; saddened eyes intense with yearning and the sensuously applied paint revealing a sumptuous interior are not new to Dicksee. A

similar theme with two women in an intimate interior bathed in a warm glow cast from an intensely lit lamp, revel in past memories as sounds arise from the piano in Memories, 1886. "For the touch of the vanished hand, and the sound of the voice that is still" were the lines Dicksee chose to accompany the painting.[24]

A year after A Reverie Dicksee carried the theme of mystery and melancholy caught up in a dramatic moment to include all the trappings evocative of a sentimental mood in The Confession, 1896 (Plate 12). Reduced to the simplest of form, the frail woman now sits in the easy chair as the man opposite her, head in hand, gazes steadfastly into her eyes. What is this darkened figure hiding, or revealing? She wears the same dress as in A Reverie, but the piano is gone and the shallow space, devoid of any bourgeois accoutrement, holds no more than these two figures. This time light streaming in from the window behind him casts him in shadow and serves to illuminate her, accentuating her delicateness. An interesting play of light on dark, and dark on light, sets the mood for The Confession. The Art Journal, 1896, described this as "A wan and emaciated woman in the last stage of apparent illness, telling her story to a saddened man, who is sitting with his face in shadow, and his head resting in his hand. The picture is in pale colors, greys and greens, and its curious indefiniteness of effect seems somehow to add to the hopelessness of the whole subject.[25]

Plate 12. Sir Frank Dickee: The Confession, 1896, oil on canvas, 114 x 160 cm., Roy Miles Fine Paintings, London.

The obvious connection between A Reverie and The Confession suggests a sequence of events. In the latter work the man is confessing, his thoughts, feelings, and images of the past that haunt the present. Plagued by the fusion of real and imagined images, he lives in an ambiguous space, neither here nor there.

Frank Dicksee presents still another side of realism and genre subjects. Like early Whistler and Hunt, he uses the image of the piano to create mood. Like music, their paintings express an emotion felt: Whistler's and Dicksee's shrouded in mystery, Whistler's one of technique and design and Dicksee's of the spectral while Hunt's Awakening Conscience uses the piano and music as a part of a rich iconography that serves a detailed narrative account. Dicksee's works hover, like his vision, in between the two and suffers for his moderate stance. Nevertheless, all comment on the social position of women in the second half of the nineteenth century and the importance of music, in reflecting that position as a performer/medium, and in the case of Whistler, the ultimate submersion of such associations of an "art for art's sake" philosophy that suggests liberating woman and the piano.

NOTES--CHAPTER II

[1] Christopher Wood, Victorian Panorama: Paintings of Victorian Life (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1976), pp. 135-141.

[2] Linda Nochlin, "Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman," Art Bulletin 60 (March 1978): 145.

[3] In 1849 Hunt travelled with Rossetti to Paris, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, and Antwerp. There they encountered the works of Jan Van Eyck, Hans Memlinc, Rogier van der Weyden, Gerard David, and Hugo van der Goes. Although not his first encounter with disguised symbolism, for he frequently made use of Jan Van Eyck's Arnolfini: Wedding Portrait which was in the National Gallery (London) acquired in 1842, it was nevertheless significant, as cited in George P. Landow William Holman Hunt and Typological Symbolism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 61.

[4] William Holman Hunt, Pre-Raphallitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood,2 vols. (London: MacMillan and Company, Ltd., 1905), p. 347.

[5] Walker Art Gallery, William Holman Hunt (Liverpool: Elliot Brothers & Yeoman ltd., 1969), p. 37.

[6] Diana Holman Hunt in her biography, My Grandfather: His Wives and Loves (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, inc., 1969) reaveals the long and emotionally tormenting relationship between Annie Miller and William Holman Hunt.

[7] As cited in Major British Writers, Shorter ed., (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967), p. 784.

[8] Walker Art Gallery, p. 36.

[9] James McNeill Whistler, "Ten O'Clock Lecture, 1885," in The Gentle Art of Making Enemies (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1967), p. 145.

[10] Ibid., pp. 127-128.

[11] James McNeill Whistler, "The Red Ray," in The Gentle Art of Making Ememies, (New York: Dover Publication, Inc., 1967) p.126-128.

[12] Francis Spalding, Whistler (Oxford: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1979), p. 17.

[13] Spalding attributes this to a drawing dated 1857 by Fartin in the Oxford Ashmolean Museum.

[14] Whistler, p. 127.

[15] Spalding, p. 18.

[16] M. MacDonal, R. Spencer, and A. M. Young, The Paintings of J. M. Whistler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), P. 13.

[17] Marcel Brion, Vermeer (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1963), pp. 12-13.

[18] Whistler, p. 144.

[19] Elizabeth Robin and Joseph Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1908), Vol. 1, p. 166.

[20] Kathleen Dale, Nineteenth Century Piano Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 143-145.

[21] Whistler, pp.142-1433.

[22] Denys Sutton, James McNeill Whistler (London: Hunt Barnard & Company, Ltd., 1966). p.41.

[23] Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, File No. WAG 2280.

[24] Sydney Hodges, "Mr Frank Dicksee," Magazine of Art, 1887, p.220.

[25] Art Journal, 1896, p. 171.

CHAPTER III

The Continent

The Powers of Suggestion

Like Whistler's At the Piano, Edouard Manet's Madame Manet Au Piano 1867-1860 (Plate 13), has been reduced to essential forms, but Manet's approach has none of the expansiveness to be found in Whistler's. Instead, we are presented with what appears to be little more than an intimate glimpse of one of so many musical evenings presented by Madame Manet who was an accomplished musician and teacher. The quiet tilt of Madame Manet's head suggests a rather heartfelt performance as she concentrates on the music while playing the piano. Manet's close friend Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) described Manet's curiously cropped view in these words;

> the manner of cutting down the pictures . . . which gives to the frame all the charm of a merely fanciful boundary such as that which is embraced at one glance of a screen framed in by the hands or at least all of it found worthy to preserve. This is the picture, and the function of the frame is to isolate.[1]

This seemingly typical genre scene cropped as it is holds a fascination due to its iconography, influences, and sources of inspiration.

Plate 13. Edouard Manet: Madame Manet Au Piano, 1867, oil on canvas, 38 x 46 cm., Musée du Louvre, Paris.

One influential force upon Manet's work was his friend and poet, Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) who made his debut as an art critic in the review of the Salon of 1845. Through careful enumeration of his ideas, he sets the stage long before he begins to speak of the artist' work. Early on he puts forth his doctrines on beauty, imagination, and heroism of modern life. In so doing, Baudelaire's theories seemed to have a major impact on artists relevant to my thesis, in particular, to Edouard Manet. I wish to address only that which has a direct effect upon Manet's work. Imagination played a very crucial role in the development of Baudelaire's critical thinking--"The Queen of the Faculties" as he referred to it.

> It is both analysis and synthesis . . . It is sensitivity . . . and it created analogy and metaphor . . . It decomposes all creation, and it creates a new world . . . Imagination is the queen of truth, and the possible is one of the provinces of truth. It has a positive relationship with the infinite.[3]

Baudelaire later goes on to say that the imagination is creative and can penetrate beneath surface appearances to detect hidden analogies between different manifestations, modes, and levels of existence, and that the imagination can reconcile the eternal with the finite, the natural with the supernatural and the moral with the metaphysical.[4]

A natural extension of the imagination is the application of its faculties to modern life. Just copying nature without imagination was, to Baudelaire, deplorable. He called for artists to paint in accordance with what each

one saw and felt, but above all, to remain faithful to one's own nature. To interpret the present age with an understanding of the parodies that exist within a growing society where contemporary conditions are devoid of moral and spiritual worth was to be valued as modern. Set forth within this doctrine was also a passionate cry for beauty. He reveals the beautiful relative to Romantic expression as that which rests neither in the choice of subject nor exact truth, but in a feeling. He explains that "the great painter of modern times . . . will give to each one of his characters an ideal beauty, derived from a temperament which is constituted to feel the effect of that passion with the utmost vividness."[5] In his discussion, he argues that real beauty comes not from the classical ideal, but from individual emotions both static and moving.

> All forms of beauty, like all possible phenomena contain an element of the eternal and an element of the transitory--of the absolute and of the particular. Absolute and eternal beauty does not exist or rather it is only an abstraction creamed from the general surface of divergent beauties. The particular element in each manifestation comes from emotions: and just as we have seen our own particular emotions, so we have seen our own beauty.[6]

While Baudelaire was propounding his ideas on what modern painting should be, painter Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) was setting forth his theories on art. "To be able to translate the customs, ideas and appearances of my time as I see them--in a word to create a living art--this has been my aim." He went on to say that "The art of painting can consist only in the presentation of objects visible and

tangible to the painter . . ." and that he need apply "his personal faculties to the ideas and things of the period in which he lives. . . ." However, he also expressed that "painting is an essentially concrete art, and can consist only of the representation of things both real and existing. . . . An abstract object, invisible or nonexistent does not belong to the domain of painting."[7] Thus Courbet provided the essential break from mythological, historical, and religious subjects of the Romantic tradition and ushered in a new concept in painting around mid-century. Manet, in a sense furthered Courbet's realism, but more so championed Baudelaire's hero of modern urban life. A mutual friend of both, Baudelaire declared that each had a "decided taste for reality, modern reality."[8]

The depiction of modern life as Manet presents it is a complex mixture of past and present. Political unheaval which brought the new liberal bourgeois to the forefront in the 1848 Revolution finally clashed with the deprived working class and paved the way for Napoleon III in 1852 to reestablish the empire of Napoleon I. Paralleling this period of political revolution was Manet's artistic revolution. Plagued by the desire to comply with his strict father's wishes and enter the field of law or follow his own need to paint, a duality emerged which set the stage for opposing forces that were to dominate Manet's art throughout his career. Recognizing the past as part of the present, Manet searched for a style that would successfully merge

tradition with a freshness reflective of life around him. It has long been established that Velazquez and other Spanish as well as Dutch painters were a major source of inspiration for Manet. Max Friedlander refers to this source as the Golden Age of Genre, seventeenth century Dutch and Spanish art. In his description of genre, he tells us, "the historical picture says: that happened once; the genre picture says this happened often . . ." The regular occurrences of these happenings reveal not only the human condition but all circumstances of that condition and manifests the ideal type.[9] Manet gives us more than the typical. He reveals himself and his thoughts through his art. On the subject of genre Hanson notes that Manet not only treats a common type but that these types are also illustrated in popular magazines of the time,[10] thus establishing his tendency to reconcile past and present.

Manet once said, "Already many people speak well of me. But I feel they don't understand me. They don't grasp what there is in me or at least what I try to show. . . ."[11] George Mauner ponders this to be an indirect reference to Manet's Les Etudiants de Salamanque (1859-1860), and parallels the misunderstanding that takes place within the narrative of the picture to be the same misunderstanding of his work that Manet expressed with reference to the general public. Just as the students missed the point by not literally digging beneath the surface to discover the moral message, so too, the public misses the point by not

figuratively searching beneath the surface to discover the truth. Mauner interprets Manet's work of the 1860's to conceal dual qualities of both man and nature and the fusion of opposites. He develops the homo duplex idea of Manet the contemporary man and Manet the traditionalist and further proves each theme to possess a multi-layered iconography due to Baudelaire's influence.

"The duality of man's nature and in particular his own, was the central problem of Baudelaire's troubled life and finds repeated expression in his poetry and prose."[12] The most obvious duality is good and evil as evidenced by Les Fleurs du Mal. Here the poet views the susceptibility of the artist, due to his sensitive nature toward sacred as well as evil forces to be the greatest. Baudelaire was also attracted to similar themes of other artists--Wagner's Tannhäuser in particular. The forum for the fusion of existing polarities is the human heart struggling between life and death, body and soul, heaven and hell. Mauner shows that Manet synthesized the universal and timeless tenets of opposing forces and applied them to his painting clothed in contemporary garb. So complete is his synthesization that the duality of his themes are manifested in the art of painting where illusion and reality become one. In this I follow Mauner and suggest that Madame Manet Au Piano falls within this multilayered homo duplex framework.

Rustling softly as her hands move skillfully over the keyboard, her black dress with organdy sleeves reveals the

formality of a musical evening. Madame Manet's darkened form cast against a light wall fills an undefined shallow space. Equally curious are two unexplained shadows as well as two empty chairs. Perhaps Manet is suggesting the presence of the family unit: Suzanne whom we see and her husband painter as well as her son Léon. The quickening rhythm of dark-light contrast creates a strong horizontal movement that leads the eye to the third wall panel above the piano. Unlike the other two empty wall panels of varying size, this one is filled with the reflection of time past and present. The mirror as vanitas theme is not new to Manet, but the dual nature of the mirror makes it difficult to separate appearance from reality. The clock on the mantle appears to be a picture on the wall over the piano, yet it is actually a reflection of what is across the room. The clock itself serves to suggest the mortality of life. It reflects the present, yet for Manet, the timepiece represents the past.[13] Undoubtedly, it was at his mother's insistence that Manet's younger brothers be given piano lessons, and Suzanne Leenhoff (who became Manet's wife) was the teacher. Just barely visible on either side of the clock stand two candles, another symbol of the brevity of life.

> Man's life can be compared to a Dreame, to smoke, to vapour, to a shadow, to a puff of wind, to a shadow, to a bubble of water, to hay to grass, to an herb to a flower, to a leave to a tale, to a vanitie, to a weaver's shuttle, to a wind, to dried stubble, to a post, to nothing (From An Herbal for the Bible Published, 1857).[14]

Through these everyday objects that serve Manet, he tells us of the transitory nature of modernity. But what of Madame Manet, an already ambiguous figure, surrounded in mystery? Daughter of a Dutch organmaster, Manet married her in 1863, only one year after his father's death, yet he had lived with her and her son Léon for more than eleven years. It would seem likely that the mirror of reality would reveal more than a reflection. Denis Rouart notes that Madame Manet Au Piano was based on a drawing of a head of a woman (Plate 14). If this is so, then I suggest that this head reveals an ideal or type of devotional image common to seventeenth century Spanish painting. With her eyes raised, her head slightly back and her mouth open singing praises, she carries within her image the echo of a saint, St. Cecilia, patron saint of music. A common reference to the past with a contemporary meaning, Manet has elevated Madame Manet to the level of sainthood where she reigns as spiritual keeper, and the music suggests musical harmony, family harmony, and spiritual harmony past and present since the scene is set at the home of Manet's mother. It is the same piano that provided for Manet's childhood musical evenings as well as bringing about the relationship between Manet and Suzanne.[15] The key to bridging the two worlds of the past and present lies in the music for while it rests both in the real world on the piano and in the dream world of the mirror, it also exists in time and has inherent in its very nature, past, present and future which Manet can only suggest in

Plate 14. Edouard Manet: Drawing of A Head, red chalk on grid, 25.5 x 18.5 cm.

painting.[16] Manet's fascination with the evocative powers of music, in particular Suzanne's piano playing manifested itself in other ways.[17] Another domestic interior, La Lecture, 1868-69 (Plate 15) reveals Suzanne sitting on a sofa with her hands posed as though she were playing the piano. In the same way that Whistler evolved from musical symbol to evocation of sound, Manet moves from the piano to the suggestion of a musical reverie through the visual symbol of Suzanne's hands, poised and about to take him on a silent journey.

Manet and Baudelaire were major contributors to the development of late century symbolism. To define symbolism as an artistic movement would be far too much to express within the confines of this paper. Yet, there are aspects of the Symbolist movement which share a common ideology among European artists in the last decades of the nineteenth century that are crucial to the relationship between music and painting. To define symbolism would be to contradict the very nature of its essence for its primary purpose is suggestion.

> To name an object is to suppress three quarters of the pleasure in the poem which stems from the joy of divining little by little; to suggest, there is the dream. It is the perfect use of this mystery which constitutes the symbol: to evoke an object little by little in order to show a state of soul. . . .[18]

were the words of symbolist poet Mallarmé. The idea of suggestion, evocation, dream state, mystery and soul were all part of the working language of the symbolists. But what

Plate 15. Edouard Manet: La Lecture, 1868-69, oil on canvas, 61 x 74 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

is it that these poets and painters alike were eager to suggest: If we think of literary symbolism and the symbolism of painters as a simultaneous and parallel development, we can easily see how communication among artists would have influenced one another. By 1890 Café Voltaire became a melting pot of symbolist ideas that eventually extended to Mallarme's famous "Les Mardis," weekly gatherings of poets, painters, critics, and musicians. Of critical importance to this group were the works of American writer Edgar Allen Poe, initially translated by Charles Baudelaire and later by Mallarmé who learned to speak English with the express purpose of understanding Poe and translating his works. Poe's poems were not only translated into the French language, but Manet created a series of lithographs and Paul Gauguin an etching intrepetating his famous poem, "The Raven." What Baudelaire and Mallarmé found epitomized in Poe's work was an emphasis on pure poetic form with an inherent musical quality, the idea of artist as outcast, and the poetic structure that produced intentional vagueness and evocation of feeling. The general nature of Poe's influence left room for other poets to develop their own personal ideas and theories. To this Baudelarire added his theory of pessimism reflected in the dual nature of man who possesses tendencies toward both good and evil which is explored in Les Fleures du Mal. In his "Correspondences," Baudelaire theorizes that external objects share affinities with the senses, states of mind and character, and further adds that

by blending word, tone, image, and rhythm, the absolute nature of each sense would be achieved through symbol which we have seen already being done visually by Manet.

Mallarmé deems suggestion all important similar to Poe. Language is to express, not describe, states of mind as does music. To understand symbolism, one must leave the objective world behind and explore the vague inner realities of the spiritual world, almost always heard in silence, and experience the feeling or other state of consciousness.

> In a magic way a sound can evoke an entire life in endless perspective, a color can become a concerto, and a visual impression can arouse terrifying orgies in the depths of the soul.[19]

How to reach the depths of the soul where silence reigns and reality and illusion merge is the artist's mission. Paradoxically, music can lead to the evocation of intangible and silent reveries. The symbolist's viewed music and the suggestion of sound as the most "symbolist" in idea because of its allusive, fleeting quality--the least material and most abstract.

The aforementioned poets were to have an insistent influence on a number of artists in the late nineteenth century as did the paintings of Manet and Whistler.

The Belgian anglophile Fernand Khnopff's painting Encoutant en Schumann 1883 (Plate 16) subtly portrays the correspondences between the spirituality of music and painting. It depicts Khnopff's mother, seated in an easy chair, with her hand shielding her face, wrapped in a moment of reverie, hearing not the individual sounds rising from

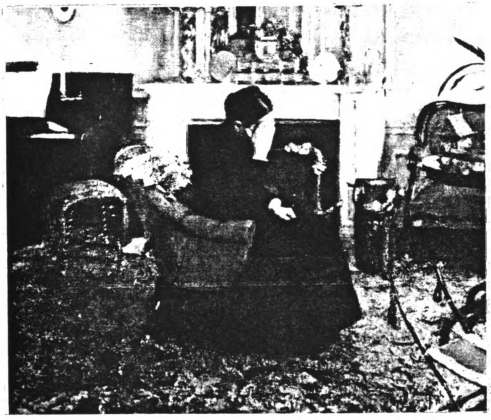

Plate 16. Fernand Khnopff: Encountant en Schumann, 1883, oil on canvas, 101.5 x 116.5 cm., Musées Royeaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

the piano, but "the universal music that they (the sounds) symbolize."[20] This early painting by Khnopff does not seek through abstract form or color to evoke the sound of music, but instead emphasizes the silence through muted harmonies alluding to a state of consciousness where one explores the inner regions of the self. The desire on the part of artists to evoke music has inherent in the effort a conundrum, for painting cannot make sound or exist only in time as music does. A painting is an object unlike the evanescence of music. Meanings and suggestions it can evoke but its existence is silent. Khnopff accepts this and exploits the contradition. Once again music is evoked by a woman in the bourgeois parlor. It is neither Hunt's cluttered Victorian parlor nor Whistler's austere evocative music salon, but a stage set with visual equivalents suggestive of a quiet mysterious mood. He juxtaposes reality and illusion through material objects and arrives at the essence of silence. Symbolist writer Maurice Maeterlinck believed that "the life that is genuine, and the only one that leaves some trace is made of silence alone."[21] Yet through silence and shutting out all external appearances a level of consciousness is reached and in this state one can hear the sounds of the universe and the primal cry of the inner self. One must explore that which lay beneath the surface to experience reality. Khnopff tells us that for him, the music of Schumann becomes the vehicle to the interior like the body seeks creature comforts in a bourgeois interior, the soul's

inner life is experienced within. Why Robert Schumann (1810-1856)? By way of the piano with its infinite capacity to evoke emotional intensity through harmonic suspension and dynamic shadings, Schumann carves a musical path to the unconscious mind analogous to writer E. T. A. Hoffmann's literary path whose tales reveal a sense of probing and searching the interior world of the spirit with its own unique symbols, severed from the conscious world of physical phenomena and reason. Thus Schumann acknowledges the existence of the inner self, separate from its external role and his music becomes the vehicle for reorientation.[22] Throughout the 1830's, Schumann developed a series of piano cycles Fantasiestucke and Intermezzi which reveal dramatizations of aspects of the self based on Hoffmann's works.[23] Through the symbol of word, Schumann is free to develop an equivalent musical structure corresponding to the mood of the story. His fantasies reveal a freer form with repeated themes that weave the unifying thread from section to section, each of varying length. Not considered movements of standard form each part represents an emotional mask expressing the full range of human experiences.

Cloaked under the guise of the bourgeois parlor, Khnopff suggests that by listening to Schumann, one can reach the reality that lay beneath the surface--the spirit of the inner self. He reveals the human condition of the silent interior through the mirror over the mantle. He was influenced by Belgian poet Georges Rodenbach who said: "My

soul is alone and nothing influences it. It is like glass enclosed in silence, completely devoted to its interior spectacle."[24]

Dramatically poised in the middle of an almost impressionistic world of short, delicate strokes, Khnopff's mother, whose hands and exposed ear are clearly and meticulously rendered, leans forward in her chair, supported by her hand shielding herself from her surroundings. Her bent head rests in a direct path to the mirror's reflection of a darkened doorway concealing its mysteries within. Her reverie takes her on that journey that will reveal her inner self. Cut off from full view, only the right hand of the pianist floats over the highest registers of the piano, perhaps suspending notes that are sustained by the pedal and doing what only music can do, disorient and reorient. Khnopff's sister Marguerite, who was to become his favorite model, may hold the key to the duration of their mother's dream state where silence reigns and an unseen reality emerges. The source of music analogous to the interior state lies hidden from view. Yet, one feels the separate notes rise and crystallize in the dense still atmosphere surrounding immobile figures. The heavy silence compels one to listen.

Khnopff's developing symbolist aesthetics leads to the pure evocation of musical harmony in I Lock My Door upon Myself 1891 (Plate 17). Because his art generally expresses analogy in natural objects depicted, he was nonetheless

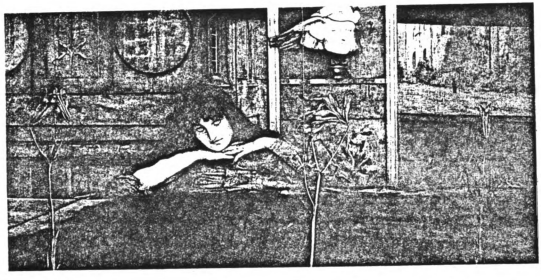

Plate 17. Fernand Khnopff: I Lock My Door Upon Myself, 1883, oil on canvas, 72 x 140 cm., Bayerische Staats des Gemaldesammlungen Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

acutely aware of musical correspondences that found meaning in formal expression. I suggest a musical theme here in connection with a lecture delivered in Paris by writer Georges Rodenbach, in 1878 and later in Belgium on "Pessimism in Schopenhauer and Leopardi" that Khnopff probably attended.[25] Rodenbach exerted a dominant influence on Khnopff's theory of artistic isolation. In 1888 and in 1891, Rodenbuch published Du Silence and Le Regne Du Silence, respectively. Here Schopenhauer's pessimism resurfaces deeming solitude as the link with the invisible or the unknown. Schopenhauer believed that music is an exact copy of the will, or the essence of reality. He dealt with the dichotomy between the conscious and the unconscious, and since music is the direct manifestation of the will or unconscious, it can only be experienced in a dream state.[26] Reinhold Heller's interpretation of this postulate in relation to art practice states that

> an art work, whether painting or poem, should discover a vocabulary independent of the limitations imposed by external forms . . . and laws of grammatical construction as well as the illusionism of perspectival rendering could be discarded in favor of reconstructing a visionary vocabulary of sounds or colors having no causal connection.[27]

In other words, it creates a mood beyond the visual reality that is perceived as a dream state because of illogical juxtapositions. Therefore, the viewer would be transmitted beyond the visual world to the world of ideas. For Khnopff, a dream state exists in silence and solitude and finds reiteration in the Bust of Hypnos and the transparent eyes

of a woman. The image of the piano is no longer present, but perhaps this pure untouchable woman of another realm leans on a draped virginal, symbol of music and sign of purity. She is the mistress of an ambiguous interior temple obscured in the maze between past and present. Her reveries are only reflections. Regularized rhythms and subtle harmonies find resolve in silence. There is only a suggestion of sound in this ordered and static vision, yet there is music of an ethereal quality that allows one to mediate on the soft, subtlely suspended floating notes of this dense atmosphere and experience the true self and the world of ideas.

Closely associated in style with Khnopff's Listening to Music is Belgian, James Ensor's Russian Music 1881 (Plate 18). Ensor accused Khnopff of plagiarism and paralleled this incident with the theme of Emile Zola's L'Oeuvre where Fagarolles (Khnopff) plagiarizes the work of the unhappy hero Claude Lantier (Ensor).[28] Early on Ensor felt at odds with himself, fellow painters and society, and although these two paintings are similar, they each reveal the two totally opposite paths that these artists were to follow. Already we see the importance of light, warm color and music that is to dominate Ensor's work. Russian Music falls into Ensor's early preoccupation with domestic interiors. Several works reveal family members and friends in the home environment. Not unaffected by mood or drama, each one of his paintings exudes an intangible as well as visual tension that at once appears both enigmatic and haunting. It is here

Plate 18. James Ensor: Russian Music, 1881, oil on canvas, 133 x 110 cm., Collection Musées Royeaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

in his early work that tension, mystery, and symbolic representation so prevalent in his later works first appear. Ensor exploits the domestic interior not as a genre picture, but as a means to exploring the self, through the juxtaposition of illusion and reality. He once said about the work of this period: "I was guided by a secret instinct, a feeling for the atmosphere of the seacoast which I had imbuded with the breeze, included with the pearly mists soaked up in the waves, heard in the wind"[29]

Pearly, white ocean light floods the parlor accentuating the richly impastoed strokes that delineate warm tones of the carpet from the dark piano set against the back wall. A woman with her back to the viewer plays the piano while her visitor, Ensor's friend and painter Willy Finch, sits elegantly poised, legs crossed and hands in his lap in the center of the room. Beside him his hat rests up side down on the highly polished table which in its reflective power puts it upright. An atmosphere of stillness pervades; the player and the listener retreat into separate worlds. A soft breeze blows gently through an open window parting the curtains that reveal an opaque light originating from neither sun nor cloud. The mirror over the piano does not reflect the barely glimpsed window, but an unseen one next to it. Never far from his beloved North Sea, Ensor's hazy light creates a unifying visual harmony akin to the continuum of waves that reach the unseen shore. Strongly

affected by this pearly light, Ensor recalled an incident of his early youth.

> One night when I was asleep in my cradle, in my illuminated room with windows wide open on the ocean, a big sea bird, attracted by the light, came swooping down in front of me and jostled my cradle. Unforgettable impression, wild fear, I can still see that horrible vision and I can still feel the hard shock of that fantastic black bird, greedy seeker of light.[30]

In the stillness of this illuminated room, haunting memories, stirred by the sounds of Russian nocturnes, pervade. He goes on to say,

> I was even more fascinated by our dark and frightening attic, full of horrible spiders, curios, sea shells, plants, and animals from distant seas, beautiful chinaware, rust and blood colored affects, red and white coral monkeys, turtle dried mermaids and stuffed chinamen.[31]

Again, appearance and reality are brought to light through the reflections in the mirror over the mantle that holds the china vase of the past with its "rust and blood colored effects."

An avenue to Ensor's happy youth is also recollected through the stuffed china doll under a glass globe--usually a position reserved for a clock. Past and present blend in the tension between familiar objects bathed in a warm glow, and the odd and often ambiguous perspective in which these objects are presented. Happy childhood memories struggle in the midst of atmospheric tension. Out of the parlor's reality comes not flowing melodies of bourgeois happiness, but family life threatened by growing tensions.

By 1933, Ensor already lived a long and productive life. His early career was marked by disapproval, rejection, misunderstanding at the Academic Royale des Beaux Arts to membership in the avant garde group, Les Vingt. Recognition, wide acclaim, exaltation, titles of knighthood and baron, were bestowed upon him and he was proclaimed Prince of Painters and awarded the Legion of Honor. From the subdued tones of his early somber period where muted colors and vagueness are equivalent to sounds emanating from the piano, he arrives at an explosion of raw and strident color akin to abundant energy bursting forth the music of Stravinski into--a harmony of color. Paul Haesaerts refers to this period as his "crystalline" period where freedom of color and luminosity prevails.[32] Ensor at the Harmonium 1933 (Plate 19) reveals an autobiographical account expressive of color, ordered harmony, and regular rhythms.

Insecurities in his life as in the painting are behind him now. "Christ' Entry Into Brussels which churns with hard and soft creatures that the sea throws up . . ."[33] dominates the wall behind the harmonium at which he sits. A tidal wave of masked figures surge forward, but this time, Ensor turns his back to them. The confrontation between self and others is no longer necessary. Stemming from a time when Ensor was rejected by the public, Christ and martyred artist were one and the same--crucified and surrounded by tormentors and hoping to be understood. To the left, on the table, sits the feathered hat of Portrait of the Painter in a Flowered Hat

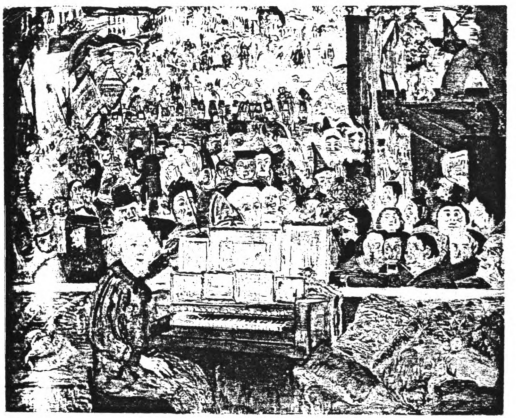

Plate 19. James Ensor: At the Harmonium, 1933, oil on canvas, 80 x 100 cm., collection P. Croquez, New York.

1883, where a saddened Ensor confronts the public without acceptance. Finally, the harmonium itself represents a touchstone as well as creative force in Ensor's life. Said to have dazzled his visitors with improvisations, colorful and intense, an aged man brings forth with brilliant luminosity the story of his life. Flat, undefinded space fuses appearance with reality and primary colors exude a bold forthright composition. Ensor, the male creator, sits at the domestic version of the organ rather than the female interpreter, and hesitancy gives way to security. His life is summed up in terms of a massive, colorful chord--the final cadenza, similar to the expressive folk idiom so prevalent in Russian music. Like Russian music, Ensor's art reveals a colorful vitality unthwarted by academic structure. Perhaps the title of his earlier painting foreshadows the direction his art is to take.

The master of suggestive interior was Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940) whose silent melody issues forth and weaves its harmonies round. Midst the profusion of flowers, a sonata of form and color bursts forth. Almost mysterious in its darkness, the strong horizontality of the grand piano juxtaposed against the delicate floral patterns dancing on the wall, creates a visual as well as psychological tension. Concealed within this melody, four women blossom and merge with the decoration, the bouquet of fresh flowers spilling forth from a vase on top of the piano, and with each other. Where is the reality, where is the illusion, and where does

this floral pulsating space find its resolution? For this we must look beyond Edouard Vuillard's The Piano 1896 (Plate 20). As one of four decorative panels created for the home of his friend, Dr. Vaquez, it is in part a response to a general cry for decoration that emerged in the 1880's. "No more easel pictures. . . give us more walls to decorate . . . Down with perspective . . . Walls must be kept a surface and must not be pierced by the representations of distant horizons . . ."[34] It is also, in part, a visual synthesis of his private world where he gives form to feeling. It is not unusual that Vuillard would turn to those people and events closest to him: his mother, her business, and his friends, for his greatest inspiration. A reverent and mutual respect coexisted between Vuillard and his mother whom he lived with all of his life. Devoted to her, she, in turn, championed his work with genuine enthusiasm. The daughter of a textile designer-manufacturer, Madame Vuillard, after the death of her husband in 1883, turned her Paris apartment into a dressmaking shop in order to support her family. A tradition of fabric design was Vuillard's heritage and he lived easily amidst the fascinating world of colorfully patterned bolts of silk and velvet.

As Andre Chastel points out, the Vaquez panels also found inspiration among the fifteenth and sixteenth century French tapestries, especially the millefleur or thousand flowers then in favor.[35] A powdering of little white flowers emerge from a field of blue or mauve revealing a naturalism

Plate 20. Edouard Vuillard: Au Piano, 1896, distemper on canvas, Petite Palais.

and harmony of colors which place them among the most accomplished in French tapestries. Secular themes pervade and in particular, rural life, amusements and pastimes dominate.[36] Known to have visited the Unicorn tapestry, Vuillard successfully harmonizes the traditional past with contemporary life.

The four panels in their entirety, reveal themselves as a musical metaphor--an intimate piece of chamber music in four movements. A melody of color introduced in one panel becomes the unifying thread in the tapestry of Vuillard's life. He presents us with a musical narrative that through color, negates real space and evokes an atmosphere and feeling of mystery akin to the hushed sounds emanating from the piano. Roger-Marx tells us that these four panels, The Piano, The Writing Table, The Reader and The Library are the visual equivalent of a reverie.[37] The viewer has only to look upon hearing the sound like Vuillard so often heard while listening to his friend and accomplished pianist, Misia Natanson, to capture a moment as fleeting as the duration of a musical piece. He carefully balances the horizontal piano which echos its stability in the rug and coffered ceiling panel with the intricately complex movement of wallflowers and patterned dresses to create a psychological tension equivalent to a sustained bass and arpeggiated treble. He appropriates the mirror-like quality of reflection to these panels; not by including a mirror, but by presenting the essence of his remembrances of daily

life, so close to him. By doing this, he invests his characters with a second, more permanent life, yet they "retain only a semblance of their original life . . .[38] The paintings become the mirror that reflect not the real world, but an imaginary world vested with music, silence, fragrance, a sea of mauves, lilacs, blues and greens, and the soft velvety texture of a tapestry. Russell interprets critic Andre Gide's remark made in reference to these panels as a "well-bred, soft spoken dreamland."[39] Gide goes on to say: "I do not know what I like most here. Perhaps M. Vuillard himself. I know few works where one is brought more directly into communion with the painter. It is due to his speaking in a low tone, suitable to confidences, and to one's leaning over to listen to him . . ."[40] He aptly expressed the feeling exuding from these decorations, that of an intimate glimpse into the important parts of Vuillard's life--interiors, woman, and silence. Already on close terms with Mallarmé, and his concept of suggestion as evocation of mood, Vuillard's panels are a re-creation and enlargement of his intimate interiors so suggestive of a reflective mood, imbued with a haunting silence that were done in the 1890's. His set of decorative panels loses none of this suggestion of interior, personal feeling. In the merging flowered forms, Vuillard presents the things closest to him: music, and silence. Woman becomes the spiritual keeper within the garden enclosed and music is the path to this dream state.

Vuillard's artistic development evolves from an intimate quartet of chamber music to a single Symphony in Red, 1898-1900. He moves from the depiction of the piano which evokes sound that is analagous to a musical state to color as a musical idiom. From a profusion of flowers, like notes that weave a harmony to a consistent tonality that creates a harmonic progression, Vuillard presents yet another musical interior. The symphony reverberates not from rhythmic movement but from a single tonality. The rich fifteenth century tapestry has given way to nineteenth century symbol. Where Vuillard initially used a piano to evoke a reverie, he now uses just a musical title to symbolize an interior state. Color characterizes the emotional climate.

As a member of the Nabis, Vuillard's style developed in keeping with Gaugin's symbolist-synthesist theories. That is, the existence of a visual equivalent to that which can only be felt. Vuillard also exhibits in his interios, a distinctly Mallarméan mood of suggestion in a hushed silence with an air of mystery.

As we have seen, the symbolism of Baudelaire and Mallarmé has exerted a strong force on painting by the turn of the twentieth century through its powers of suggestion. Also influential is the Romantic movement in music which provided for a musical expression of feeling or mood through extended harmonic progressions, instrumental color, strong contrasts, varied rhythms and tonal modulation. Classical

structure has given way to expressive form that suggests rather than defines.

Within a traditional framework, Manet plants the seeds of symbolism that carries through the works of Khnopff, Ensor and Vuillard. Each artist, in his own way evokes, suggests and reveals a journey in to the interior self through a musical mood. At first all exploit the image of the piano to suggest music, then evolve to a suggestion of mood akin to the abstract qualities of music.

NOTES--CHAPTER III

[1] Stéphane Mallarmé, Documents Mallarme edited by Carl Paul Barbier, (Paris: Libraire Nizet, 1968), p.79.

[2] Baudelaire and Manet maintained a close friendship between 1860 and Baudelaire's death in 1867. Nascent theories that Baudelaire put forth in 1845 continued to be developed throughout his relationship with Manet. It is conceivable that an exchange of ideals took place and that Manet would habe been aware of Baudelairés early theories. Gerge Mauner, Manet Peintre-Philosophe A Study of the Painter's Themes (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), p. 39, cites that Baudelaine and Manet know each other while Manet was a student with Coutour between 1850 and 1856.

[3] Charles Baudelaire, The Mirror of Art Critical Studies, translated by Johnathan Mayne, (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1988), pp. 232-233.

[4] Charles Baudelaire, The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays, (London: Phaidon Prss, Ltd., 1964), XIII.

[5] Charles Baudelaire, The Mirror of Art Critical Studies, p.86.

[6] Ibid., p. 126.

[7] Gardner's Art Through the Ages, seventh edition (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1980), p.758.

[8] Pierre Schneider, The World of Manet (1832-1883) (New York: Time, Inc., 1968), p. 37.

[9] An Coffin Hanson, Manet and the Modern Tradition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 58.

[10] Ibid., p. 59.

[11] George Mauner, p. 163.

[12] Ibid., p. 16.

[13] A gift to his mother from the King of Sweden upon her marriage to Auguste Manet, she, like Suzanne, was also an accomplished musician who held musical evenings twice a week.

[14] Seymore Slive, "Realism and Symbolism in Seventeenth Century Duth Painting," Daldalus (summer 1962), p. 491.

[15] Suzanne became the piano teacher of the then Manet teen-age boys in 1850. E. Manet was 18.

[16] A connection made by Mauner in reference to Manet's Portrait of Zacharie Astruc 1863-64, in which a book of Japanese prints rests in the field of the mirror and the field of Astruc, applies here as well, Mauner, p. 154.

[17] In 1865 Manet's friend Edgar Degas captured Manet, lost in reverie listening to Suzanne play the piano in Edouard Manet et Mme Manet. Manet, nowever did not like the portrait of Suzanne and tore the canvas in two, causing a slight row between the two friends. Degas took the canvas back with the intention of repainting it but never completed this project, probably due to Manet's 1867 version of the same subject.

[18] Les Mardis Stéphane Mallarmé and the Artists of His Circle, The University of Kansas Museum of Art.

[19] Robert Goldwater, Symbolism, (new York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979), p. 227.

[20] Ibid., p.29.

[21] Jeffrey Howe, "Mirror Symbolism in the Work of Ferdinand Khnopff", Arts, 53 (September 1978), p.112.

[22] Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision, (New York: George Braziller, 1962), pp.205-215.

[23] Taken by the literary masquerade scenes of Hoffman, Schumann titled three of these piano cycles, "Papillons," "Carnaval" and Faschingschwank . . . Masks of the Psyche or Disguises of the Self. Peckham, p. 210.

[24] Jeffrey Howe, "Mirror Symbolism in the Work of Ferdinand Khnopff", Arts, 53 (September 1978), p.112.

[25] Goldwater, p.210.

[26] Peckham, p.149-150.

[27] Reinhold Heller, "The Art Work As Symbol".

[28] The Brooklyn Museum, Belgian Art 1880-1914, (new York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1980), p.106.

[29] John David Farmer, Ensor, (New York, George Braziller, 1976), p.10.

[30] Ibid., p.9.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Paul Halsaertos, Ensor, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1959), p.213.

[33] Ibid., P.178.

[34] Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, Edouard Vuillard, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1954) pp.20-21.

[35] John Russell, Vuillard, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971), p.67.

[36] Roger-Armand Weigert, French Tapestry, translated by Donald and Monique King, (Newton, Mass: Charles T. Branford Company: 1962), pp.76-77.

[37] Claude Roger-Marx, Vuillard His Life and Work, (new York: Editions de la Maison Francaise, 1946), p.126.

[38] Russell, p.55.

[39] Russell, p.67.

[40] Roger-Marx, p.125.

CHAPTER IV

Keys to the Abstract

Nicholas von Dumba, Viennese art patron at the close of the nineteenth century commissioned Gustav Klimt, leading artist of the modern movement in Vienna to execute two sopraporte paintings to hang in the music salon of his palace, number four on the fashionable Parkring. Schubert am Klavier 1899 (Plate 21)[1] filled one sopraporta while Die Music II (Plate 22) occupied the other. Confronting each other across the abyss of the music salon was the embodiment of fin de siècle Viennese culture,--art, music, and philosophy--as well as social and political life. How did Klimt arrive at this presentation? What were his intentions and what message if any did he hope to convey? What would these singing voices say if they were to lay down their music and speak out and would the silent stone statue divulge its secrets?

Although novel in their presentations, this inseparable duet of paintings had their beginnings long before von Dumba's commission, and Klimt, while an innovator in art was as much a product of the greater social and political forces that overwhelmed Vienna as he was a proponent of a new style of art. He inherited a legacy, a tradition of historicism

Plate 21. Gustav Klimt: Schubert am Klavier, 1899, oil on canvas, 150 x 200 cm., burned in Schloss Immendorf, 1945.

Plate 22. Gustav Klimt: Die Musik II, 1898, oil on canvas, 150 x 200 cm., burned in Schloss Immendorf, 1945.

that was also a part of his style, yet he went on to encapsulate the spirit and anxiety prevalent in modern society through visual symbols.

The crystallization of an idea that began to germinate in 1866, is refined when Klimt represents Nietzschean ideology current in Viennese intellectual circles, symbolically within each picture as well as integrally related with one another. In a rather haunting and unsettling space, Franz Schubert sits in profile view with his hands on the keys of a barely visible piano playing what one would assume to be a lied with subtle tonal modualtion and colorful harmonies in Schubert am Klavier. Behind him stand two women engrossed in their singing as another woman, in frontal view, stands before a burning candle which sits on top of the piano. Illuminated from below her facial features cast deep, dark shadows and enhance her feeling of distance through a silent hollow stare which is echoed in the faint figure of a man looming out of the darkness. From across the room, another candle burns and finds its reflection in the mirror. A feeling of underlying tension weaves its way slowly throughout the vibrating glow and shadow of darkness. This is no ordinary bourgeois parlor. Who are these figures and what is Klimt trying to tell us? A glance across the music room to Die Music II will impart some understanding.

Dark wavy hair accentuates a finely sculpted face that holds pursed lips and clearly defined transparent eyes. The

driving rhythmic line descending from her neck to the bottom of the picture forms her feminine figure. No longer a fragile victim of nineteenth century female imagery, she asserts herself, imposes her will and reveals a sensuality both enigmatic and fascinating as well as freightening. From the kithara she holds, long langourous tones issue forth only to crystallize in the stillness of the shallow space. Close to her the Ionic capital reveals a Dionysian faun's mask and grapes. Ivy and roses spill forth from the background uniting antique symbol with decoration. On the right, a curiously serene sphinx confronts the viewer. The classically ideal face evokes the god of light and ruler of the dream world, Apollo. Two symbolist tendencies are reflected here. The temptress, associated with the sphinx, half animal, half human--a symbol of pure lust; and femme fatale, synonymous with evil and destroyer of man. Woman in the second half of the nineteenth century has gone from a fragile, vulnerable victim to the cause of death and destruction through prostitution and subsequent disease.[2]

On another level, Klimt reveals this picture as a totally Dionysian concept and Schubert am Klavier as an Apollonian vision. These two different interpretations are possible because the Symbolists, like Klimt, raid the past and juxtapose objects and images already redolent with meaning and associations. With unexpected combinations he creates multilevel complexities of meaning that can be approached in many ways. Part of Arthur Schopenhauer's

metaphysical thinking that fin de siècle intellectuals were drawn to dealt with the dichotomy between the conscious and the unconscious. If music is the manifestation of the unconscious or the will, then understanding the nature of the will is central to understanding music. Schopenhauer believed that the will manifested itself through dreams as its only means of communicating with the conscious world. Wagner argued that music was analagous to the dream because it provided the link between the subjective realm of the unconscious to the objective world. He also reasoned that music in its most elemental form was a cry of terror and an anguished expression of the unconscious will. Upon hearing this cry, the hearer experiences it on an emotional level. Music made up of this elemental sound could then link the conscious with the unconscious.[3] Therefore, music represents the real nature of the world because it is a copy of the will itself (or the unconscious). The Dionysian aspect of music causes one to lose oneself in ecstasy and experience nature while in an unconscious state.[4] Therefore Die Music II is a representation of the unconscious character of the real world; anxiety ridden fear of women that existed at the turn of the century.

Across the Dumba music salon hung the Apollonian dream aspect, Schubert am Klavier,[5] in which short delicate strokes define the forms as they blend softly into one another. The sillhouetted form of Schubert creates a rather sensuous line that calls to mind that of the modern maenad

across the room. Curiously, the spectrally illuminated woman at the far left corresponds in shape and position to the sphinx across the room. She stands enveloped in a dream state--the essence of Apollonian nature, yet it is in this dream trance that one loses sight of waking reality and experiences total joy--the essence of Dionysian nature. The picture then becomes a reflection of reality across the room. Dream and reality confront Dionysian eroticisms and Doric order. "The most beautiful painting ever painted by an Austrian,"[6] said Hermann Bahr. Why? Because according to Carl Schorske, it captured a Biedermier dream that never existed.[7] Music, especially the music of a composer was seen as the aesthetic crown to a safe and secure social heirarchy, yet it was anything but secure and intact. Gottfried Scholtz refers to this time as "Weltschmer" or cultural uneasiness due to the realization of unsolvable national problems, a weakening of religious convictions, and a "slipping away of the world." Theodor Herzl, <u>fin de siècle</u> contemporary writer, in the cultural section of the press dealt with feeling, mood, personal interpretation, subjective response, narcissism, introversion and sensitivity to psychic states. Aesthetic culture was beginning to turn inward to discover the unexplored self. Art and music became the vehicles for reaching within and touching the soul.[8] A great searching began and all aspects of life became a journey in search of acknowledgement, understanding and revelation of the instinctual self. This

striving drove artists, musicians, poets and novelists alike to delve into the mirror of self and seek the truth. These transcendental stirrings became the tour de force behind the intellectual, artistic and musical circles. Klimt chose to represent his attitude toward a society that masks reality through a decorative means. He questioned through pictorial images existing society and just as ornament and decoration create a glittering facade for that which lay beneath the surface, so too does his personal style reflect a reality that lay beneath the surface. He spoke metaphorically through pictorial image and used music as the vehicle for revealing a hidden reality. The function of music for Klimt then, is the embodiment of an idea where the symbolic meaning rests in the instrument itself. The piano is the avenue to reaching the dream state and the strings of the kithara produce the music of that reality.

Where Klimt exploited the piano as an evocation of an impressionistic dream state that never really existed, Max Klinger (1857-1920) reveals through music a very solid and tangible dream image in Evocation 1894 (Plate 23), one of forty-one prints executed for the "Brahms Fantasies" cycle.[9] No longer is music just a suggestion, but the mystery and sense of ambiguity inherent in the dream state itself is experienced through music. Set before a sharply delineated balustrade, a darkened cloak cradling a mask, is furled to the front revealing a nude woman whose outstretched arms are about to begin plucking the strings of the harp before her.

Plate 23. Max Klinger: Brahms Fantasy Evocation, acquatint and mezzotint, 29.2 x 35.7 cm.

These strong forms of man, piano, harp and woman emerge providing a drama that is directly connected to the crashing waves of the sea behind them and the lightly etched raging titans in the soft white sky. In his search to reconcile the dichotomy between realism and fantasy, Klinger initiates a profoundly original expressive style that remains true to his draughtsmanship and imaginary visions, yet he produces a work symbolic of societal concerns. This duality in Klinger's work was present from the beginning. His academic training under Karl von Dussow, a realist genre painter, and his great admiration for Goya which led him to subsequent study with Charles-Emile Wauters, painter of the macabre, allowed for a fusion of these two disparate tendencies. Kirk Varnedoe reconciles this opposition "as owing to his conscious confrontation of an aesthetic dilemma affecting numerous European artists of his generation; that of finding a more expressive naturalism . . ."[10]

We learn of Klinger's theories on line and color in his essay Malerei and Zeichnung when he says:

> The most prominent characteristic of drawing is the stark subjectivity of the artist. It is his world and his way of seeing, his personal observations about the world around--and within him that he depicts . . . The difference between the painter and the draughtsman cannot be more sharply defined . . . The painter's is not actually a critical eye--he prefers to beautify . . . The draughtsman, however, looks at the perpetually unfilled holes, the yearned for and the barely attainable; his can only be a personal coming to terms with a world of irreconciable powers. The painter bodies forth his optimism . . . the draughtsman cannot escape his more nay-saying vision.[11]

Klinger fully exploits the realm of fantasy as well as utilizing the widest range of print techniques in Evocation. The mezzotint foreground figures possess a deep rich velvety tone that contrasts with the finely etched titan figures of the light filled sky and unfolds a drama pregnant with underlying tensions. The balustrade, with its soft grey tone of the acquatint provides the compositional as well as technical division of the picture. He juxtaposes realistically rendered forms, that in their totality, present a bizarre and fantastical image. Like Klimt, he borrows images from the antique past and because of their jarring juxtapositions appropriates a new and complex interpretation.

Evocation is the visual manifestation of the power that music holds in touching an emotion. Wagner's theory of Gesamkunstwerk reveals Klinger's belief in the totality of art. The entire Brahms cycle was conceived as a tribute to his close friend Johannes Brahms. Not meant to illustrate, these forty-one prints of which Evocation is one, were designed to evoke the feeling of the music. These prints which display the broadest range of technical virtuousity accompanied a series of songs and a choral work by Johannes Brahms. The folio contains the musical score with Klinger's visual imagery in full-sized scenes as well as smaller vignettes interspersed throughout. The series, like the music is presented in two contrasting parts. The first part contains four songs for solo voice and piano with five

etchings and twelve lithographs, and the second part recounts the legend of Prometheus in six plates followed by four engravings and eleven lithographs.[12]

Klinger, in Evocation brings to the visual realm the feeling and musical mood of Brahms' setting for four-part chorus of mixed voices of Friedrich Hölderlin's "Schicksaslied" (Song of Fate). The text itself is representative of current pessimism, powerfully grim and appealing to Brahms. The second part from which Evocation is a synthesization, anxious mood depicts mortal man as a plaything of destiny that flings him helplessly into the abyss of the unknown.

> To us tis not given to find repose here on earth
> They vanish, they falter, our suffering, suffering brothers.
> Blindly, blindly from hour to hour they are driven
> Like spray of the cataract recklessly plunging
> down, down to doubt and darkness below.[13]

Brahms sets the mood of this section through strong tonal contrast introduced by a change in tempo and frenzied chromaticism. Drama is given form through continual repetition of the opening musical phrase "To us is not given to find repose here on earth" in a four part unison with each repetition more pronounced with staccato-like frenzy that emphasizes its poignancy. Klinger reflects this underlying anxious tension visually through deep tonal foreground figures juxtaposed against lightly etched storming background figures, restlessly and endlessly tossing about, and the continual repetition of the crashing waves--all represent the eternal flux as a part of the

rhythm of life. Woman, as the force of nature personified, flings off her cloak and mask to reveal her true self. The man at the piano mesmerized by the vision is uncertain if not awestruck. The duet between man and nature rages; as well as the conflict between man the artist creator and woman the creator for, in Greek mythology the titans are the children of mother earth who eventually meet their demise. Fin de siècle social anxieties, fear of women and search for truth are manifested through classical symbol. Klinger, like Brahms, works within a classical framework and extends his medium to create a mood reflective of contemporary anxieties. The solid reality of these images does not allow one to float off into suggestion. The fantastic made so real is unsettling and even jarring.

Bridging the gap between symbolism and abstraction is the work of Frantisek Kupka. His search for expressive form led him to a series of musical themes that were reflective of a state of mind or a feeling made manifest through the piano keyboard. Thick impastoed strokes of bright Fauve colors delineate a boat moving toward a background shore in Piano Keys-Lake 1909 (Plate 24). Small ripples of moving water distort the reflection of the bouquet of forms as they merge with the keyboard in the foreground. Through the water, the keyboard reflects, distorts and moves as the keys become one with its surroundings. Fingers on the keys produce the tones that resound in an echo of wave and color. In its apparent flatness, an ebb and flow surges through the

Plate 24. Frantisek Kupka: Piano Keys-Lake, 1909, oil on canvas, 79 x 72 cm., Collection Národiné Galerie, Prague.

picture like the swelling fortissimo and gentle piano of a musical progression. Music as the harmony of life is in continual rhythm. Here Kupka synthesizes and manifests the essence of his past studies: that of spirituality and music. In 1894, while at the home of painter-philosopher Karl Diefenbach who believed in the analogy between music and painting, Kupka once said:

> I experience magnificent moments bathed by hues flowing from the titanic keyboard of color. The principle of harmonized forces is the best answer to all questions as to enrich and grasp the picturesqueness of the colorist.[14]

Not only discussions on music and painting transpired but they worked to the accompaniment of a pianist or violinist as well.

A preoccupation with music and spirituality stemmed from Kupka's formative years when he was employed as a spiritual medium and showed great admiration for two Czech painters: Josef Mares who displayed a poetic interpretation of nature with a strong melodic line, and Mikulas Ales who illustrated folk songs. Another powerful theoretical influence on Kupka's work was his professional training at the Prague Academy under the Nazarene tradition. According to the Nazarenes two types of art existed: realistic and speculative. Kupka believed his calling was of the speculative nature. He said,

> the latter wants art to penetrate the substance with supersensitive insight into the unknown as it is manifested in poetry or religious art.[15]

This statement is particularly relative to his piano paintings of 1910-1912 in which he wished to communicate what he felt upon hearing music. For Kupka, music was a stirring emotional element. His search to prove music analogous to painting led to the reordering of time and space and representational image, yet he retained the musical title and vestiges of the keyboard. In Nocturne 1911 (Plate 25), large slabs of dark blue pigment float diagonally up the canvas, reminiscent of piano keys, ascending notes, night, and water. It is not unusual that this would recall Whistler's Nocturne Blue and Gold for it was exhibited in 1905 at the Whistler retrospective in Paris, where Kupka was living. Nocturne was originally conceived as a memory of Kupka's moonlit garden.[16] In both instances he represents piano keys as the musical link between past and present. He believed that music was composed of nondescriptive units and visually created these units as a harmony that relates paint to feeling. In the early stages of his work, meaning was tied to visual appearance, then he began to move from these strong resemblances of objects to the ideal of music through vertical planes--relative to the keys on the piano. Kupka needed to create an art that had personal meaning, yet not representational form, because for him it didn't say enough. Painting had to strike an emotional chord, like music and he used a musical symbol-the piano key, to give meaning to form. The reduction of the piano to black and white keys is

Plate 25. Frantisek Kupka: Nocturne, 1911, oil on canvas, 66 x 66 cm., Collection Museum des 20. Jarhunderts, Vienna.

to seek in these abstract minimals an evocation akin to music without clear associations that sully the purity of the ideal.

Kupka arrived at abstraction naturally through two separate forms: the curvilinear and the rectangular. His transition to abstraction was long and derived from a variety of inspirational sources. Rooted in the nineteenth century where all art had meaning, Kupka had to discover a new approach for giving meaning to form, because if form had no meaning, it had no reason for being. He arrived at the concept of significant form through the images of woman and the visual equivalents of musical qualities, such as rhythm, repetition, movement and color as vehicles to abstraction.

His early work is dominated by women, usually nude, set within a natural land or seascape. It is, however, The Girl With A Ball, 1908 (Plate 26) that holds the seeds for one avenue of development toward abstraction. Through the disarticulation of the circular ball and curvilinear feminine form, Kupka evolved from a figurative idiom to one of abstraction in Amphora, Fugue in Two Colors, 1912 (Plate 27). In keeping with his search to make painting analagous to music, it was not until his study of Bach fugues, interpreted by his musician friend Morse-Rimmel, did the idea of visual orchestration of musical form "where the sounds evolve like veritable physical entities, intertwine, come and go,"[17] crystallize.

Plate 26. Frantisek Kupka: The Girl With A Ball, 1908, oil on canvas, 114 x 70 cm., Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.

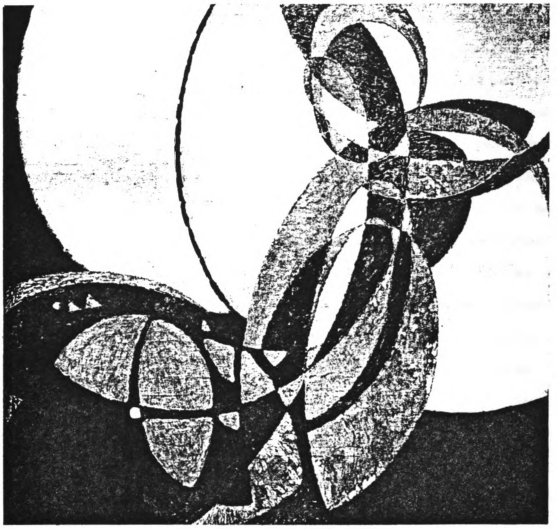

Plate 27. Frantisek Kulpka: Amphora, Fugue in Two Colors, 1912, oil on canvas, 211 x 220 cm., Collection Národini Galerie, Prague.

As we have seen the idea of the female within the interior diminish with Klimt, Kupka carries this further and abandons the interior all together. Included in the Viennese intellectual circles of the early 1890's, Kupka was aware of Klimt's work and exhibited with the Secessionists four times in the first decade of the twentieth century, specifically in 1908 when Klimt exhibited The Kiss 1907-1908, (Plate 28). An initial viewing of The Kiss, reveals a man and a woman embracing in a powerful kiss, merging into one form, confined within a golden niche set upom a flowered earth. An embrace of life and death. A futher reading reveals the male figure defined by a decorative pattern of strong rectangular vertical bars, and the woman formed by colorful circles and ovals. Long golden threads reach down and become intwined with the earth, symbolizing her tenacious relationship to nature. Klimt has already defined man and woman in symbolical terms of rectangles and ovals. For Kupka, vertical bars represent piano keys as well as maleness and there follows a natural progression from his Piano Keys-Lake, 1909 (Plate 24) to Nocturn, 1911 (Plate 25) culminating in Vertical Planes I and III 1912, (Plate 29) anticipating the geometric compositions of Piet Mondrian and Malevich.

Although Kupka begins with the nineteenth century realist's image of woman in nature or set within the interior environment, he abandons this traditional representation to become very much a part of his time. There

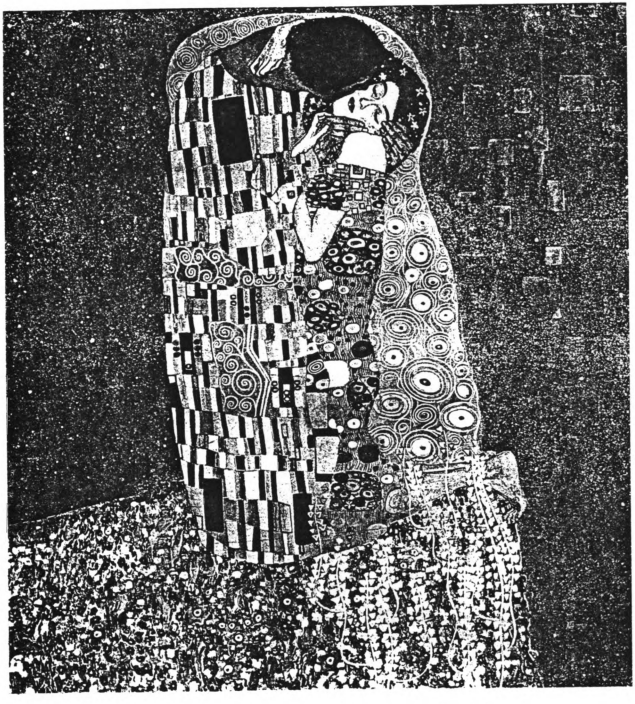

Plate 28. Gustav Klimt: The Kiss, 1907-08, oil on canvas, 180 x 180 cm., Osterreichische Galerie, Vienna.

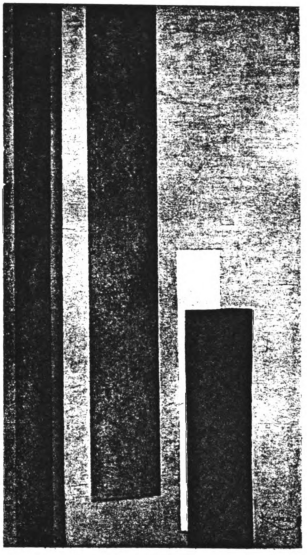

Plate 29. Frantisek Kupka: Vertical Planes III, 1912, oil on canvas, 200 x 118 cm., Collection Národini, Prague.

is a lessening interest in representational images as witnessed in the works of Wassily Kandinsky, Sonia and Robert Delaunay and Picasso and these images are no longer necessary. In the early decades of the twentieth century, as the social role of women changes, she is no longer associated with the interior of the piano, yet Kupka uses both the woman and the piano to arrive at abstraction.

FOOTNOTES--CHAPTER IV

[1] A study for this work shows that the man at the piano is not schubert. Novotny and Dobai maintain that von Dunba owned a watercolor, "Schubert and his Friends, 1821 by Leopold Kupelweiser and that from this, klimt was able to paint a portrait likeness of Schubert in the final version of 1899.

[2] Patrick Bade, Jenime Fatale: Image of Evil and Fascinating Women (New York: Mayflower Books, Inc. 1979); p.33.

[3] William J. Mcgrath, Diouysian Art and Popular Politics in Austria, (new Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974), pp.121-2.

[4] Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision, (new York: Geoge Braziller, Inc., 1962), p.146-148.

[5] This is the second realization of Apollo and Dionysos confronting each other across an expanse of space. The first version appeared in 1866 in the north and south lunettes of the newly constructed Burgtheatre on the Ringstrasse, showcase of Viennese culture. A decorative and historical interpretation of the Altar of Apollo and Dinoysos begin the cycle of paintings that are to reflect the Nitzschean interpretation of appearance versus reality through music that would occupy Klimt's work until 1899.

[6] Johannes Dobai and Fritz Novotry, Gustav Klimt, (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1968), p.16.

[7] Carl Schorske, Fin de Siecle Vienna Poltics and Cultures, (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1961), p.8.

[8] The Grath, p. 160.

[9] Streicher, Elizabeth and Varnedoe, J. Kirk T., Graphic Works of Max Klinger, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977), p. 88.

[10] Ibid., xviii.

[11] Jan von Adlmann, "Rediscovering Max Klinger," Art News 70: 52-5+ January 1972. p.52-53.

[12] Stricher and Varnedoe, pp.88-89.

[13] Brahms, Johannes Schicksalied, text by Friedrich Hölderlin, edited by H. Elough-Leighton, (Boston: C. Shimer Music Company, 1927), pp.8-15.

[14] Frantisek Kupka 1871-1957 A retrospective (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1975), p. 26.

[15] Ibid., p. 29.

[16] Ibid., p. 70.

[17] Ibid., p. 92.

Conclusion

The depiction of musical instruments in European painting does not begin in the nineteenth century. What does begin, is the reflection of a purely nineteenth century instrument--the piano which delineates the political and social ideologies of its time. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, piano development expressed rising middle class values. The change from a clearly articulated tone of the seventeenth century virginal, then clavichord, to vague, mellow, fluid and limitless possibilities for sensitive shadings and dramatic tonal contrasts inherent in the piano can be seen as analogous to a change from aristocratic rule to a democratic rule. Piano manufacture, sheet music production, and the rise of the virtuoso all helped to bring the piano into the home. By virtue of its size shape and mass, it represented the stability and security that a rapidly expanding world yearned for. From the onset, women played an important but interpretive part primarily due to their restrictive educational background. A woman's education was complete when she could provide for the spiritual and emotional well being of her family. Recognizing music as an emotional expression, almost before

any thing else, women were taught to play the piano as a calling card to marriage. Within the domestic temple, her virtuousness was measured in terms of her accomplishments and music making was ranked as one of the highest.

The development of a middle class focused on the individual and the importance of daily life. Around mid-century, painting began to reveal the interior domestic life and the parlor's activities were made tangible through musical evenings. The piano became the focal point and woman as interpreter had the power to create a musical reverie through "nocturnes," and "rhapsodies." Music can be regarded in one of two ways; either by seeing it as a part of the structured order of the universe, or as a phenomenon of correspondance associated with emotion and expression.[1]

The paintings I have chosen to analyze from realism through symbolism to abstraction express the duality of both approaches in their iconography. From Hunt's realist narrative to Kupka's abstract keys each one has depicted music as a tangible and visible order of things as well as an emotional state of being or mood, and through these paintings we see reflected the social condition of women ranging from fragile victim to spiritual keeper of the home to the fin de siècle femme fatale. On one level, the paintings are about music, yet they are about basic ideas that determine the nature of life's experiences. Music as an elemental sound touches the primitive. The dichotomy of the modern and the primitive exist in each, for the modern piano

produces elemental sounds and each artist felt the need to express the elemental, the primitive, the inexpressible and the unseen. To turn inside out and express a "true" reality led to symbolizing these elemental passions, but like music they come together in the search for the abstract.

Early twentieth century witnesses a lessening interest in the represenational world. As one moves toward alstraction, the image of the piano as well as the woman are no longer necessary. Yet the need to evoke a feeling or create a mood remains. The abstract qualities of music find a visual equivalent in color and line upon a flat ourface.

What Whistler had begun with abstract musical titles and Khnopff's realization of the power of music; Kupka completed with visual representations of abstracted forms in nature.

NOTES--CONCLUSION

[1] J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, p.213.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHY

Sir Frank Dicksee (1853-1928)

The elder son of Sir Thomas Francis Dicksee, painter and illustrator, sir Frank received his early art education from his father. From 1870-1875, he studied at the Royal Academy and came in contact with John Millais and Lord Leighton from whom some of his style is derived. Early in his career, he was occupied as an illustrator for books and magazines and also under Henry Holiday. By 1877 he received wide acclaim for Harmony, a semi-romantic, highly sentimental modern setting of medieval attitudes, and by 1881 he acquired the status of Royal Associate. He was distinguished for a fine sense of color and melodramatic subject partly derived from sketches made while at the Langham Sketching Club. While in demand as a portrait painter for fashionable ladies, landscape painting also comprises a small part of his work. His widespread popularity stemmed from etchings of his major paintings which were exhibited yearly. In 1924 he was elected president of the Royal Academy and knighted in 1925.

James Ensor (1860-1949)

Born on the coast of the North Seas at Ostend, Belgian painter James Ensor revealed an early fascination for the magnitude and mysteries of the sea and life around him. Powerfully influenced by the exterior world, Ensor drew from the natural world of forms and color to materialize the imaginary dream world that exists beyond time and space. The son of an English gentleman and a Flemish souvenir-seller, he remained tied to his city and sea, save for two years at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels and frequent brief trips abroad. While at the Académie, Ensor met painters Willy Einch and Fernand Khnopff and in 1883 became one of the founding members of Les Vingt, an avant garde group of artists. Ensor's early work is preoccupied with his family, friends and interiors which conceal an all pervading sense of underlying tension and mystery. The evocative power of his works emphasize the human conditions of individuals, and society as a whole. From this "Somber Period," Ensor intensified his sense of intrigue through the dominating motif of the mask. He utilizes the mask to reveal evil and stupidity and is closely associated with the works of Edgar Allen Poe, that took place within a carnival setting. In 1886 Ensor begins to use the print medium to evoke and emphasize mood, especially in his Christ cycle. Whether he exploited the thick sensuous application of paint or the fine line of the etching needle, he always revealed the essence of truth. Throughout his life, music played an

important part. He kept a piano in his studio and most of his music came in the form of improvisations, bizarre and almost violent.

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910)

Inspired by John Ruskin's "Return to Nature" cry, Hunt was one of the founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood whose short-lived career as a society revolutionized English painting and echoed throughout the nineteenth century art world. Early on, Hunt formulated his artisitic theories which expressed significant Christian ideals in a realistic way. Abandoning traditional technique of underpainting, Hunt built up his canvas on a white wet ground resulting in translucent, luminous vibrating color. Integral to the overall effect was natural daylight.

From simple beginnings and self-education, Hunt entered the Royal Academy as a student in 1845. His continual effort to present Christian ideas to a modern society led him on a voyage to the Holy Land in 1854 shortly after his conversion to Christianity. Upon his return, a studio in London and exhibits at the Royal Academy allowed for varying degrees of success. Known as a painter of ideas, Hunt was often misunderstood by the general public, as well as his critics. His rigorous attention to detail, subject matter, and a return trip to the East, led him away from the mainstream of contemporary art; but it is his preoccupation with fusing the real with the ideal for which Hunt is most noted.

Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921)

The son of a magistrate, Fernand Khnopff spent his early years in the medieval city of Bruges which was to leave a lasting impression on him and his work. After having taken a position in Brussels, Khnopff's father moved his family to their new home and it is there that young Fernand pursued his education. Following bourgeois tradition, Khnopff entered law school for one year before he was reluctantly permitted to study art. Before entering the Brussels Académie des Beaux Arts in 1876 where he was to become a fellow student of James Ensor, he studied first with paintor Xavier Mellery whose style was to anticipate Khnopff's penchant for silence. Showing great technical skill at the Académie, Khnopff distingusihed himself from his fellow classmates by taking second prize in an historical composition and torso painting competition. In 1880 he began to develop his personal style which can be perceived in three major periods; descriptive realism, allegorical symbolism, allegory with increasing classicism, and finally a period of limited production after World War I. It was in the first period where he utilized a naturalism marked by a disturbing suggestiveness of inner states of being that Khnopff executed Encoutant en Schumann and assured his position among significant Belgian artists. Influenced by symbolist literature, he moved toward an equivalent suggestive pictorial style. The Pre-Raphaelite's

version of the perfect woman attracted his attention and he turned to his sister Marguerite as his favorite model. His androgenous interpretation of her facial features dominates his work adding to the mystery, suggestion and symbolism. A well-educated private man, he remained true to his bourgeois background as well as his idea of art.

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918)

Innovator and forerunner of the modern movement in Vienna, Gustav Klimt created an art that was intensely personal yet universally relevant. His public career spanned three decades and his personal style progressed from historical realism rooted in antiquity to unconventional representation through visual symbols. Leader of the Art Nouveau movement in Austria, Klimt developed a decorative style that carried profound psychological meaning. A quick glance at any one of his works will reveal through his superb line quality which forms the basis of his compositions his rigorous training as a draftsman. An aspect of his painting unparalleled in the history of modern art is his sensitive yet dramatic use of gold that touches the ethereal realm as well as the earthly realm. With or without the gold, his works retains a richly sensual surface quality. He remains true to his decorative style as a medium of expression while successfully combining naturalism with ornamentation to produce a visually coherent and unified picture. Much of Klimt's aesthetic, social and political

ideology is revealed through the image of woman. The transformation of that image from bourgeois wife and mother or mistress to femme fatale is current with fin de siecle European thinking. Klimt shared ideas with other artists, writers and musicians, and believed in the totality in art and that a unity existed among all disciplines.

Max Klinger (1857-1920)

A diverse and prolific artist, Max Klinger is most widely acclaimed for his ability to fuse realism and fantasy into his graphic works, yet produce a compellingly modern statement depicting turn of the century anxieties. Imbued with emotion, his works expresse a deep concern for the plight of women, urban violence and poverty. Early study at the Karlsruhe Academy brought him into contact with realist painter Karl Gussow and his great admiration for Goya led him to Brussels in 1879 to study with Charles-Emile Wauters, painter of the fantastic. A year later he began a long friendship with Johannes Brahms and in 1894 he made an in depth study of Nietzsche's Also Sprach Zarathustra. Also in 1894 he produced the Brahms Fantasies, one of fourteen print cycles, based on the songs and choral works of Johannes Brahms. In 1897 Klinger was made a corresponding member of the Vienna Secession and, as a testimony to the power of music and the strong belief in the interrelationship of the arts, he executes the Beethoven statue, focal point of the Vienna Secession's 1902 exhibition. As the author of Malerei

and Zeichnung, he puts forth his theory on line and color where he gives free play to line as suggestive of the bizarre and grotesque. His achievements have exerted a lasting influence on Käthe Kollowitz and surrealists Giorgio de Chirico and Max Ernst. Born in Leipzig, the son of a soap manufacturer, he spent most of his life there.

Frantisek Kupka (1971-1957)

Thoroughly trained in the academic tradition in Prague and Vienna and guided by Maurice Denis' dictum that a picture is esential a flat surface covered with colors and arranged in a certain order, Frantisek Kupka, czech painter, paved the way to abstraction in his search for forms that are as abstract as music. His art was indeliby marked by Bohemian folk tradition and his early experiences as a spiritual medium. His professional training in Prague was steeped in the Nazarene tradition which taught contemplation and poetical and philosophical thought as suitable subject matter. Exposure to the Viennese intellectual milieu led to his later interest in Greek and German philosophers, eastern religion and occult sciences. Of paramount importance to Kupka was the harmony of color, form and motion. Kupka's road to abstraction was long and arduous as he sought to express meaning through abstract form. In the early stages meaning relied on visual appearance in his use of figurative symbolism to express metaphysical thoughts. He eventually abandoned this in favor of a musical theme which

corresponded to a state of mind or feeling. Based on Henri Bergson's definition of the rhythm of life represented through the harmony of movement and color, Kupka reached for an abstract visual pattern analagous to life and music. Recognizing this impermanent state of being, time and motion forced him to ultimately reject representation and search for a new way. He developed what he called a "new reality" governed only by the harmony of forms and rhythm. He settled in Paris in 1896 and continued to paint, write, illustrate and teach. While rejecting Cubism as the dominant art form, the Futurist Manifesto formed a lasting impression on him in his development toward non-objective art.

Edouard Manet (1832-1883)

Edouard Manet, third son of Auguste and Eugenie Fournier Manet found his first artistic support from his maternal uncle, a draughtsman. Not willing to follow his strict father's desires and enter the field of law, after a brief tour of duty in the navy, he entered the studio of Coutour in 1850. His frequent trips to the Louvre to copy Valazquez and the Dutch masters brought him into contact with Fantin Latour and Edgar Degas who remained his life long friends. By 1860 Manet had also become a close friend of critic Charles Baudelaire and subsequent years saw Manet produce his Olympia, which was accepted at the Salon while Déjeuner sur l'herb was rejected but dominated a position of prominance at the Salon des Refusés. Already Manet, a man of

means and social class was out cast as a revolutionary among painters. After the death of his father in 1862, one year later Manet married Suzanne Leenhoff accomplished pianist and teacher. In 1852, however, a son Léon was born to suzanne and Manet set up house for the three of them. Suzanne's musical accomplishments led to a friendship with other musicans and Manet counted composer Emanuel Chabrier among his closest friends. Although misunderstood by the general public Manet was held in high esteem by his fellow artists. The Café Guerbois became the meeting place for the exchange of artistic and intellectual ideas and Manet with his wit, charm and ability to debate, was at the center. Not only a painter of modern Parisian life, Manet was a printermaker as well. Through Baudelaire, he met symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, and was asked by the poet to executed a series of etchings and lithographs to accompany a translation of Edgar Allen Poe's poems. A private, senstive man who said little of his own work, revealed the transitory nature of modern life, yet reflected the past.

Edouard Vuillard (1869-1940)

Edouard Vuillard, French painter, originally planned a profession in the military similiar to his father. "I could think of nothing else at which I could distinguish myself," he once said. In fact, his early schooling under strict Marist Brothers prepared him for a conscientious and disciplined life. Not until 1894, while attending the Lycée

Condorcet did he change his mind and decide to become a painter. At the Lyceé he formed lifetime friendships with Ker Xavier Roussel, who would be his future brother-in-law; Maurice Denis, painter; and Lügne Poe, later to be a driving force in the French theatre. Already a close friend, it was Roussel who led Vuillard toward painting. By 1886 he entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts and after a two year period, discontented with academic restrictions, he and Roussel left to join the students under Bouguereau at the Académie Julian. Here they met Paul Serusier, Pierre Bonnard, Felix Vallaton, Paul Ranson, and Henri-Georges Abels and together called themselves The Nabis. Upon his return to Paris in the fall of 1888, Serusier, with some mystery, imparted the symbolist-synthesis theories of Paul Gauguin and the Pont Aven School to the newly formed Nabis. Sympathetic toward antinatural tendencies, rather than strive to capture nature, they sought to capture its essence, not its representation but its feeling, a spiritual feeling. Expressing the inexpressible and making visible the invisible served as a point of departure. How to accomplish this became the question. While rooted in traditional form, one could not be bound to the actual appearance of these forms. The Nabis found their solution in altering natural shapes, flattening form and using color in non naturalistic ways.

Vuillard felt the influence of Japanese prints and symbolist poets Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé. From

these various sources, he fashioned his own personal world of mood, decoration and mystery. His oeuvre is comprised of small interiors, intimate in subject as well as size; three sets of large decorative schemes, set designs for Lügne-Poé's theatre, and designs for Tiffany stained glass. Vuillard was also an accomplished printmaker.

James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903)

American born, educated in St. Petersburg and London, Whistler moved to Paris in 1855 to become an artist. One to quickly and adeptly synthesize contemporary art music and literature, Whistler fashioned his style based on the current realism tendencies of Courbet. He was influenced by 17th century Dutch and Spanish painting, as well as the ideas of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelities in the early 1860's. After a period of experimentation with Albert Moore's classicism, search for structure and fascination with Japanese art, Whistler arrived at expressing mood through suggestion of space, simplification of form, and a subdued palette applied in broad, sweeping brush strokes. Musical in nature, he produced paintings equivalent to sound. While possessing an affinity toward representing abstract ideas, Whistler evolved gradually to embrace Symbolist aesthetics through contact with Mallarmé Swinburne, and Burne-Jones. His associations with musicians also played an important role in the exchange of ideas between music and painting. His half sister Deborah, an

accomplished pianist entertained many musical evenings in the Haden house, as well as in the Whistler home as a child. Whistler, himself, studied the violin for a short period of time. He also befriended other musicians, such as Frederick Leyland and Claude Debussy. Major works include landscapes, seascapes, nocturnes, arrangements, harmonies, portraits, etchings, and lithographs which were exhibited widely in England and France.

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